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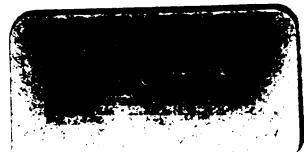
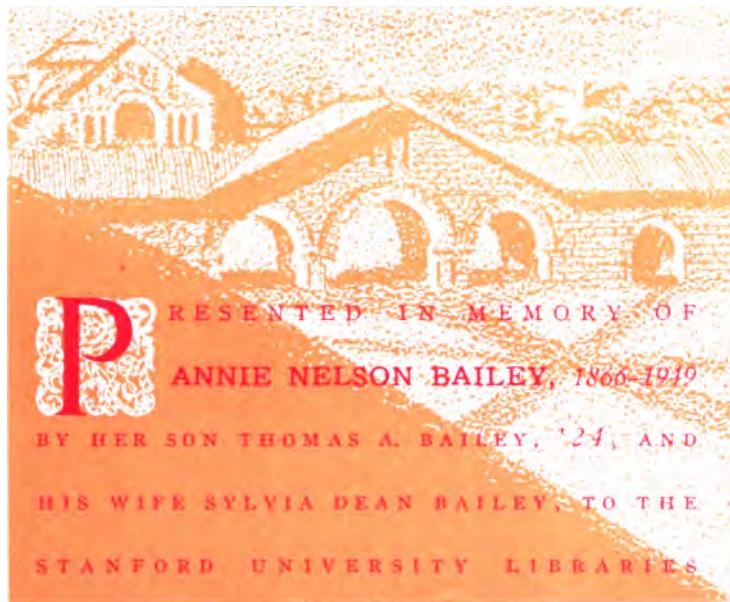
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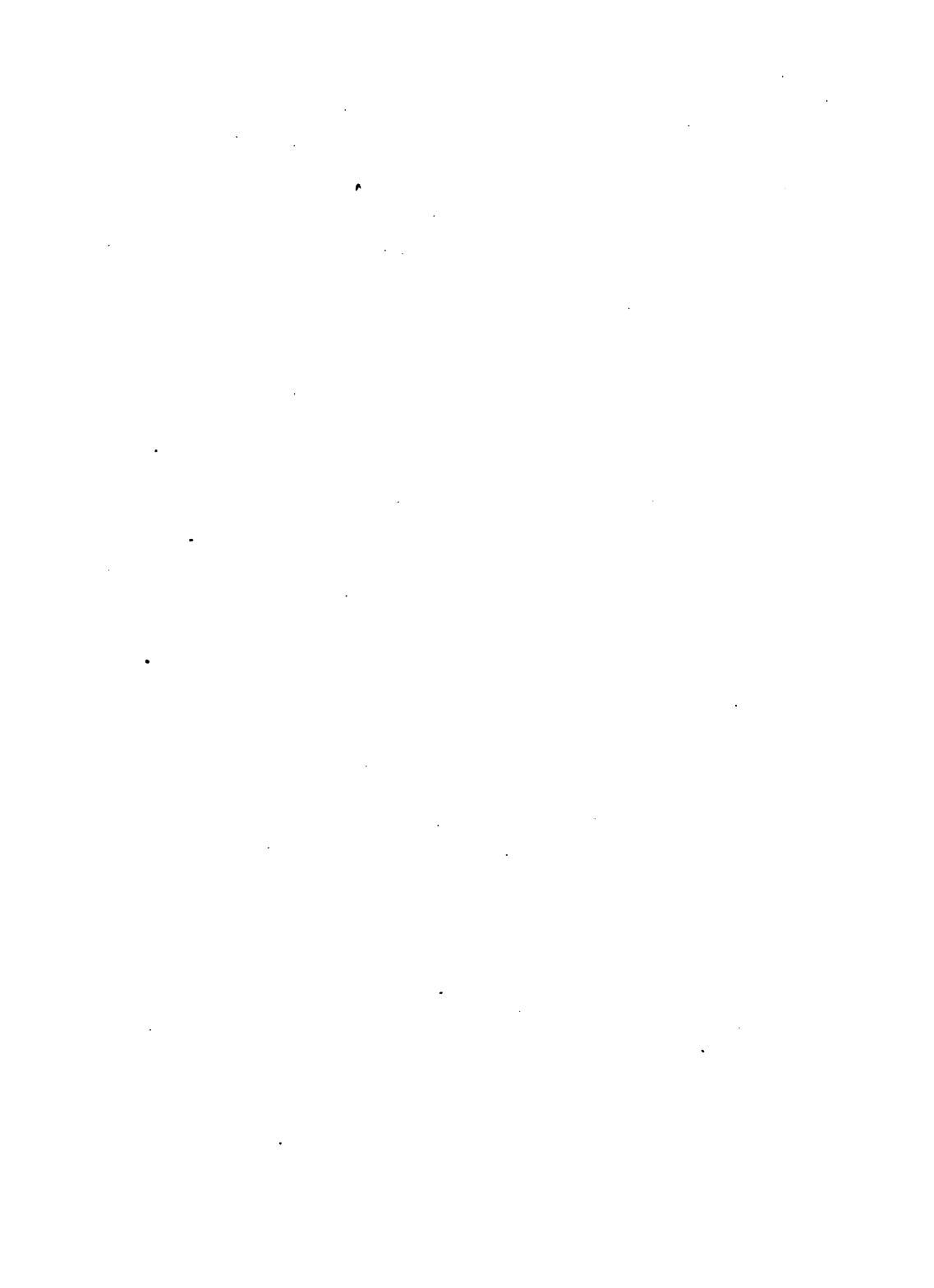
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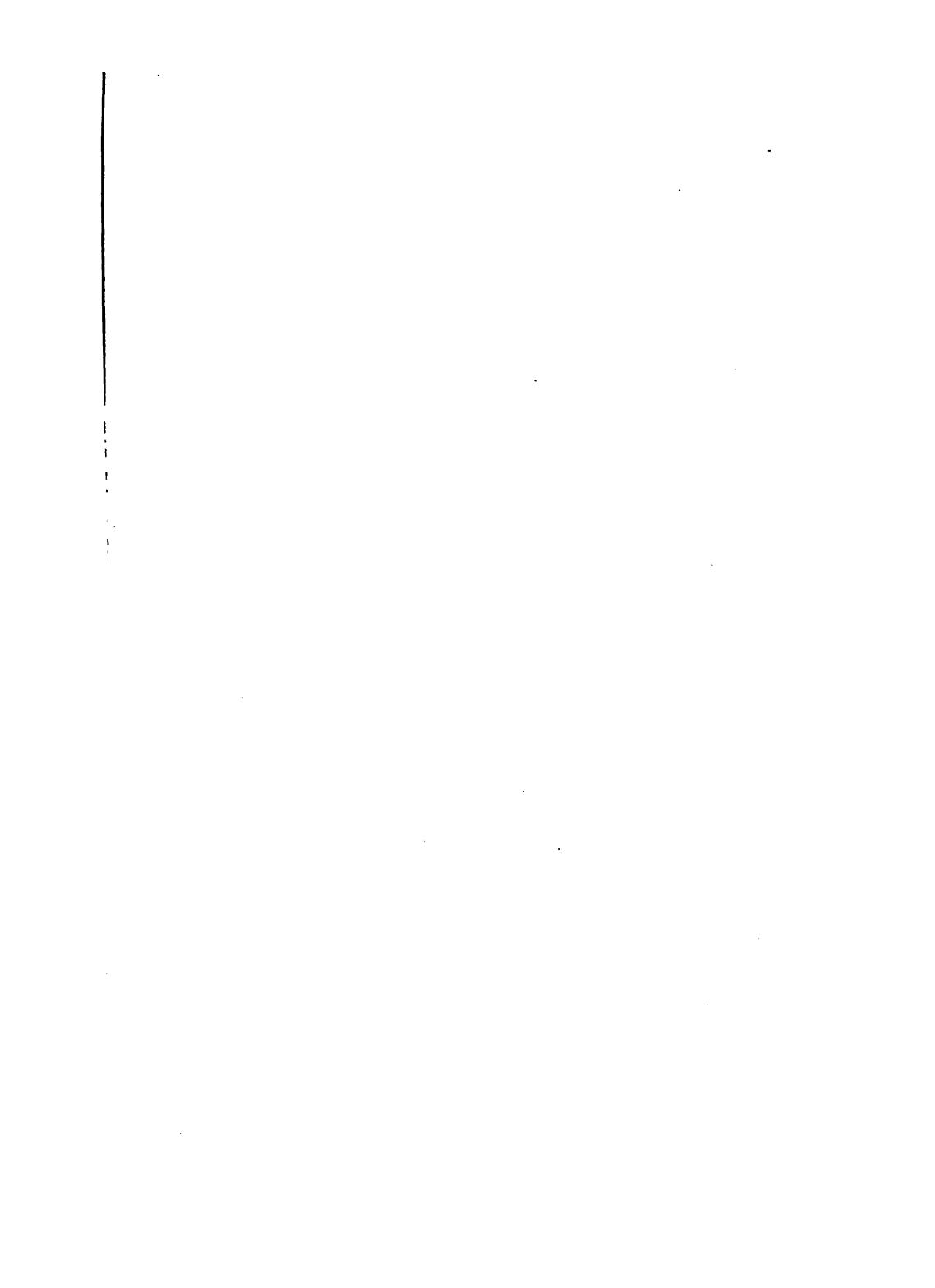
By A Farmer's Wife





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"While washing dishes . . . to look past the dining table with its flowers, and through the wide door to the living room beyond."

THE ALLEGORY OF THE CAVES

BY

I.



1946
London

THE
HEALTHFUL FARMHOUSE

BY A FARMER'S WIFE
HELEN DODD

With an Introduction by
ELLEN H. RICHARDS



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INTRODUCTION

ONE of my earliest recollections is of my father's reply to my mother's anxiety lest we should get overturned in the sleigh on the snow-drifted country road. He said, "Where any one else has been, there I can go." For ten years we spent the month of March, after his winter school was over and before the spring farm work was begun, visiting relatives in New Hampshire and Vermont; and during that time I remember but once when his confidence was not justified.

"What others have done, that I can do," is not a bad working motto. Adventurous spirits go beyond this and do what has never been done before; but the average farmer's wife cannot run too many risks, nor can she take time to undo, when the to-be-dones press so hard.

Herself brought up on a farm, having done everything that has to be done indoors or out, except milking, the writer knows very well the old farm spirit, and has deprecated the spirit of the present generation. It often seems as if our young people everywhere fail of that inner sight which carries one in safety over the most perilous places, as one may cross a stream on a slender plank if one looks only at the other bank.

In daily life we are crossing streams all the time, with our eyes on the future and with hope and faith on either side leading us safely.

Encouragement rather than criticism we all need in the hard tasks of the daily life. Especially is it needed on the farm, now that so many of the interesting manufac-

ing processes are taken from it. I well recall the excitement of candle making—a long, hard day's work, which blotted out for the time the detested drudgery of dish-washing, which never stayed done.

It would be a pleasure to help in the infusion of new thought into the life of the young people; to make them see the charm of country life when lived for the sake of living, and not for the sake of making money to spend elsewhere than on and for the farm. J. P. Mowbray's "Return to Nature," C. Hanford Henderson's "Education and the Larger Life," E. P. Powell's "Country Home,"¹ various other books, and a score of magazines have been laying before us the possible delights of rural living. But there is usually a wide gap between the ideal set before the reader and his actual circumstances.

Therefore I have asked a farmer's wife who has been over the road to tell how she and her husband have done it, to give courage to others to follow the same road. It needs courage and knowledge and faith. It needs an aim to achieve—a goal in the mind's eye.

Ten miles from a railroad, on the sunny hillside of an old farm that had inherited the collections of many generations of hard-working farmers, this household has had its own problems to solve.

It is true that the farmer and his wife have had advantages of training and association with other kinds of life, that they have acquired ideals in other surroundings; but that makes their lesson a more valuable one for those who find themselves longing, yet fearing, to forsake the bustling, wearing life of the city, with its grinding treadmill giving only just enough for board and clothes, and to adopt the freer, more restful life of the soil.

In popular literature on the subject of the farm home

¹See also, Roberts: *The Farmstead*, Chap. I.

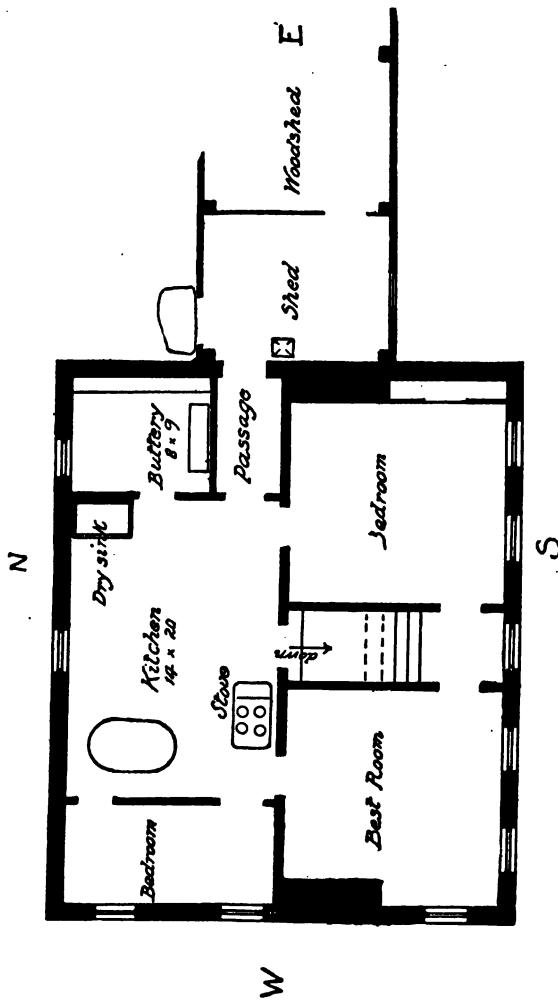
the demands seem to be for a new site, with clean soil and newly constructed buildings. But the seekers after advice usually have old buildings on long-occupied sites, and, moreover, are much hampered by local traditions of both craftsmen and neighbors.

The woman is not supposed to know anything about construction or about drains or paints or machines. There are unreasonable and ignorant women on the farm as well as in the city, but that is no reason why this generation should continue in blind adherence to tradition. The world moves; some things are found out; and there is a possibility of an interested spirit in the housewife and mother, even though her work is never done. She can learn what things are done because in that house and in the neighbors' houses they always have been so done, and what things are essential.

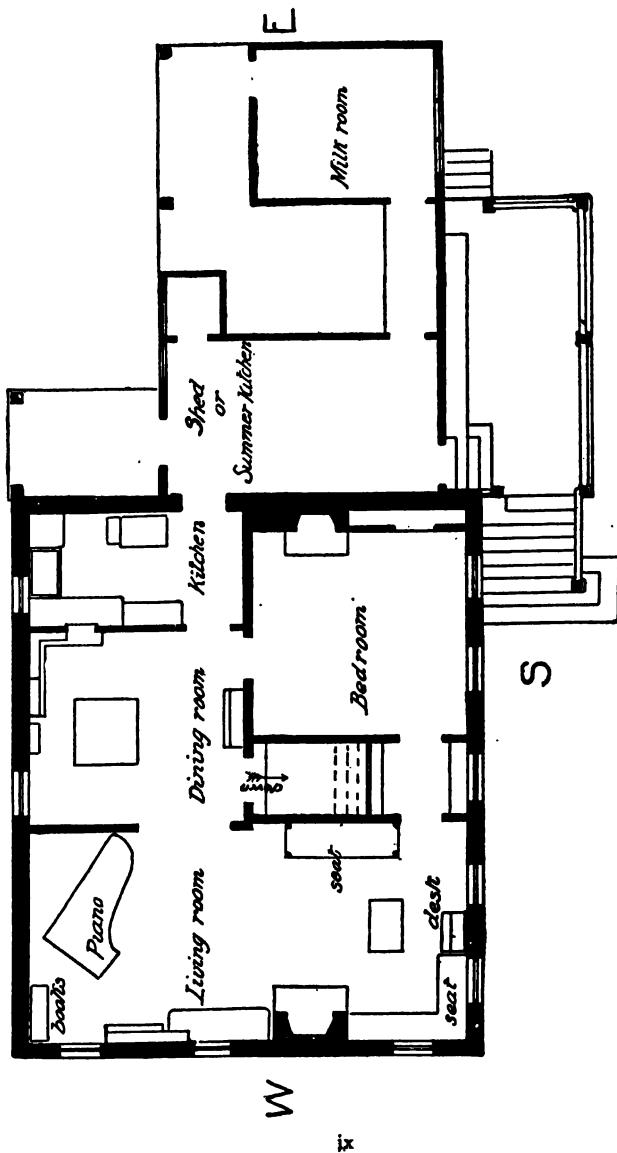
Farming as market gardening is one thing; farming two hundred miles from a metropolis is another.

Resources in one's self, in books, in art, in the doings of the great world without, are requisite; also, a possibility of abstraction of thought, so that the mechanical operations of dishwashing, sweeping, and dusting may go on unconsciously while the mind is busy with plans for the future.

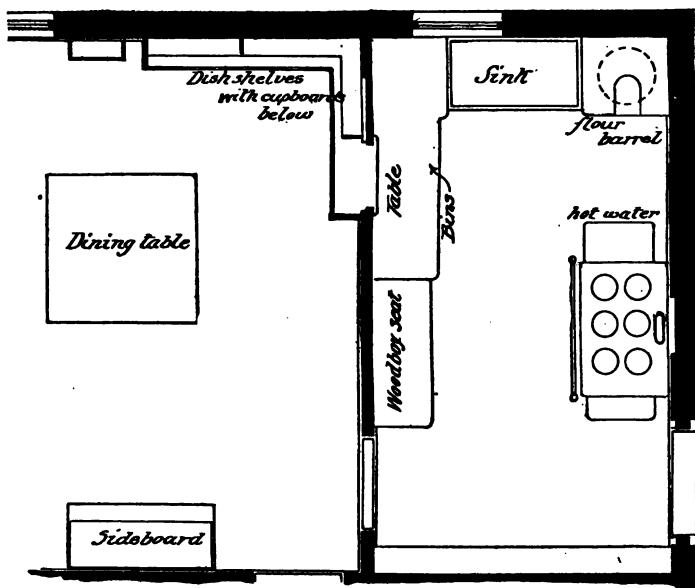
ELLEN H. RICHARDS.



As others used the house. Note that the kitchen, which is large, has but one window; that the dry sink is in the darkest corner, fifteen feet from the stove and hot water supply; that the buttery shelves and dish cupboard are twenty feet from the table; that the food, cooking utensils, and supplies are all kept in the buttery, twenty feet from the stove; that there is no provision for wood; that all dishwater has to be carried through the dark passage to the hopper in the shed.



Rearranged without affecting the outside wall's, windows, or doors. The wide door into the living room brings sunshine to the dining room and even to the kitchen; the dishes and utensils are near table, sink, and stove; the sink, with trapped drain, has the lightest position possible (see page x); the hot water is within a step of the sink; the wood box is near the stove.



Dining Room and Kitchen as Rearranged

This plan should be used with Chapters I and V. It makes clear the position of table, sink, stove, etc., shown in the illustrations facing pages 6 and 14.

FOREWORD

THIS book is written for the average farmer's wife, from the point of view of one who does all her own cooking, dishwashing, sweeping, and laundry work, yet runs a lawn mower and cares for the flower beds about the house, and does much work in the vegetable garden. It may help, too, on the large and prosperous farm, but the woman who needs it most is the one who, without "hired help," is responsible for the health and happiness of her farmer husband, her children, and herself.

Any woman who reads the magazines nowadays is convinced that simple living, a real *home*, an atmosphere of beauty and happiness are the inalienable rights of every child; and every farmer's wife wants them for herself. By making a bright and happy spot for the children, you add to your husband's living and tempt him to enjoy it, too.

Those of us who have lived in cities, who have studied and worked at professions, and who have come back to live sincerely on a farm, stoutly insist that the farm is the best place to make this happy, healthful life, full of beauty and truth, in spite of the hard work and many responsibilities. The farmer's wife, working alone, has the best opportunity in the world for bringing up her children in the ideal atmosphere.¹

But how can she do it? No one woman can hope

¹ Roberts: *The Farmstead*, Chap. III. Powell: *The Country Home*, p. 23.

to accomplish all the things she sees about her waiting to be done. There are always so many duties waiting that she is likely to fret all the time she is sweeping or washing dishes because she isn't doing her mending or cleaning the attic; the time spent in baking seems wasted when she thinks how much sewing she could accomplish in a morning; the daily sweeping does not seem half so necessary as weeding the garden.

"But this way madness lies!"

The plain duty of every farmer's wife is to "keep her balance," to open her eyes to the conditions about her,¹ to question every act and every bit of material within her control, to decide whether this is *safe* or necessary, to say to each process in the housework: "Is this necessary? Does it satisfy me or my pride, or is it done to please my family, or because others have done it? Does it *really* fit our farm life, or would my husband prefer fewer pies and better citizenship in his boys as they grow up? Does my husband enjoy better an immaculate house and a tired, discouraged wife, or a house in sanitary condition, full of happy busy-ness, and a wife keen to enjoy the children and the interests of the farm?"

So the aim of this book is to point out the dangers of the old houses and show the most necessary elements in right living, and to help those starting on a new plan for housework by the experiences of one who has tried it. A farmhouse is always different from other houses, even village houses, because it is more than a dwelling; it is the heart of the farm, the beginning and the end

¹Richards: *The Art of Right Living*, pp. 27, 48.

of every day's work. The interest of the work in every field, as well as its dirt, comes into the house with the workers, and upon the healthfulness and the happiness within and about the house depends the welfare of all the family. The principles of sanitation most necessary in farmhouses, and the changes suggested in the following pages, have all been accomplished without hiring skilled "artisans," with the exception of carpenters on a new shed and a plumber on a new sink trap. The great need is for real intelligence in every day's work, and sufficient skill to make tight and smooth joints everywhere. Any strong woman can remove entirely old wall paper, old paint, and dirt, and replace with new paper, clean paste, new paint, or kalsomine.

CHAPTER I

THE KITCHEN

WHEN we talk of the kitchen we mean the woman's workshop ; that is, the place where food is prepared and cooked and where the dishes are washed. If you have a big, old-fashioned kitchen, dining table at one end, with rugs and mirror and rocking-chairs, and perhaps a sewing machine and telephone, you have a real kitchen — the workshop at the other end, with its cook stove, sink, cupboards, and cooking tools. It gives a man a comfortable feeling to step into one of these big, old-fashioned kitchens on a winter night and sit in a comfortable chair by the stove while the supper is being "dished up" ; but if he ever had to sweep or mop that big kitchen floor, if he measured the distance a woman walks in "doing up the morning work" in it, he'd build a smaller kitchen at once! So study the kitchen end, and call the rest dining room, or living room, as it really is.¹

The first consideration is the cook stove or range. It ought to be a good one, for while cooking the food it must heat all the water for bathing, dishwashing, and laundry work. It need not be a high-priced steel range, but it ought not to be a cast-iron stove loaded with leaves and wreaths and nickel parts full of rough

¹ *The Country Home*, pp. 43-44.

places, holes, or pockets to catch whatever boils over. The most economical range for the average farm is a moderate-priced steel range. Even the small ones have big enough ovens, hot-closets, warming shelf, and, most important, the hot-water reservoir *at the fire end*. This makes it possible to heat quickly a quantity of water without changing the oven dampers or interfering with its baking. Then, too, these new steel ranges have perfectly true tops, light covers, and most of the exterior is planished steel, with smooth, nickel edges, which is never blackened, only washed to keep it bright. Their greatest value, however, is in their economy of fuel, the large, smooth flues with asbestos linings holding all the heat and keeping it steady. Between fifty and seventy-five dollars will buy one to fit any farm. Those that cost less are small, or poorly made. The large sizes are often too high for a short woman to work at, so be sure you choose the right thing for *you*. If the top of the range is too low have it set at the right height, and have the space between it and the floor covered in with carefully fitted and painted boards. Leave no cracks for dirt or water to find. Such a range will last twenty or twenty-five years without repair, if not abused, and is a good investment. Any tool or appliance that saves a woman daily annoyance or makes the work easier for mind or back is worth all it costs. Increased efficiency is looked for in every bit of farm machinery, why not in the kitchen?¹

"From the cook stove to the sink," is the pathetic path of a New England woman, and on most other

¹ Clark: *The Care of a House*, pp. 34-43.

farms, too. Is the sink near the range? Is the sink just high enough? Don't stoop over any work. Have a stool just the right height to use at the sink, and it will save many a backache and dizzy spell, besides being a factor in the real economy of a strong woman's work. In this day of cheap enameled ironware, no one should struggle with an ugly and dirty iron sink. If an iron sink is really clean it rusts; if it looks black and smooth, it feels greasy and a dish set into it carries a mark to the table. An enameled iron sink or a soapstone sink can be easily kept as clean as a polished table, and costs very little more than an iron one. But whatever its material have an open space underneath. Nothing but the pipes and drain-pipe trap should ever be under the kitchen sink. If the sink is as near the stove and table as it ought to be for your convenience, it will not be the place for everybody to wash faces and hands. Nothing is more annoying than to have to serve dinner with several people trying to wash right in your path, and nothing is further from real cleanliness than the water that spatters a long distance. The sink is to wash dishes in, not men. Take the wash basins and tooth brushes entirely away from the room where food is prepared.¹

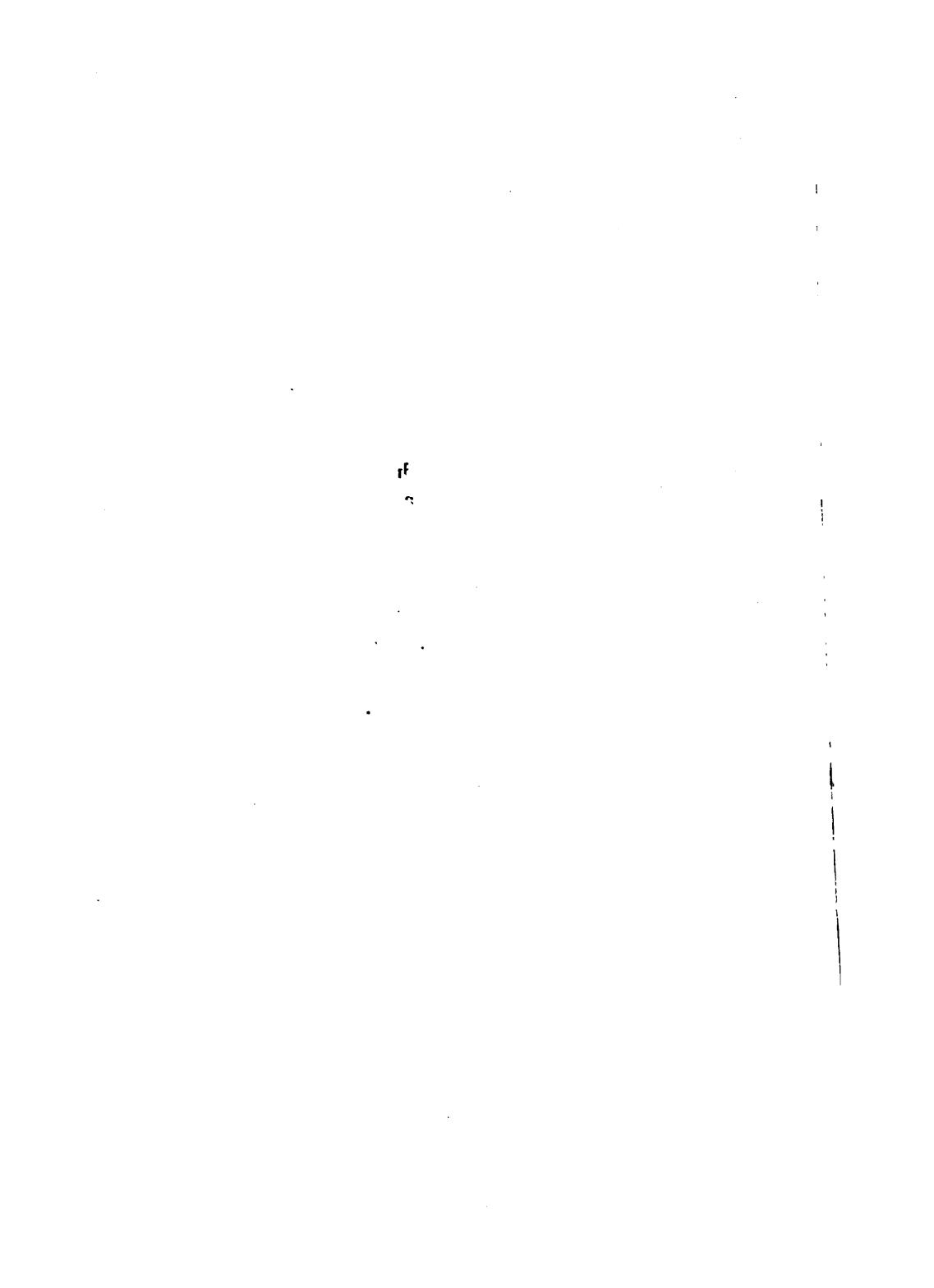
If you will keep your kettles in a cupboard have it built at one side of the sink. My kitchen has no cupboards. The big kettles — those seldom used — are kept in a cupboard in the shed. It is best to have the shelf for the heaviest kettles just knee-high; it saves much lifting.²

¹ Home Sanitation, pp. 59-61.

² The Farmstead, pp. 232-235.

A convenient arrangement of dishes and tools

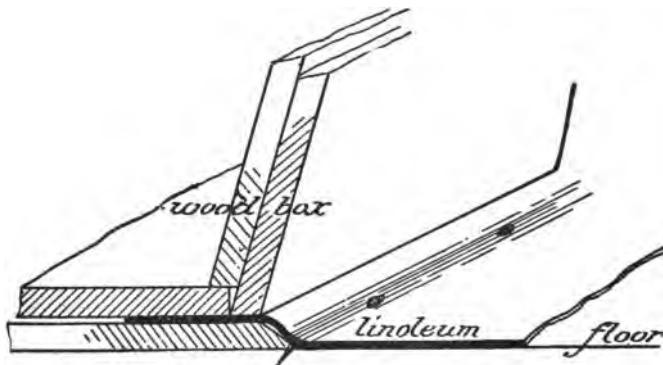




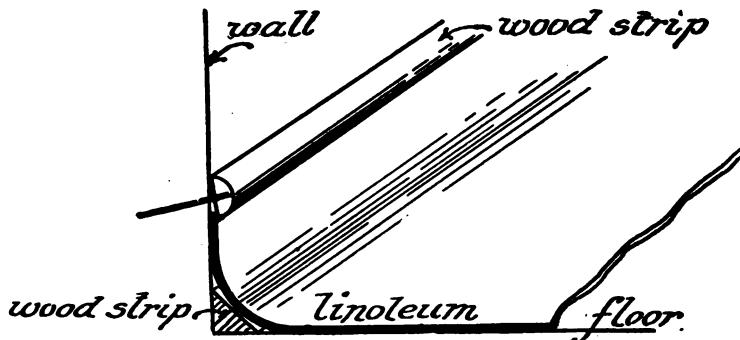
The walls are painted a soft, light yellow, and against the wall about the range hang, on brass hooks or wooden pegs, iron and steel spiders, gridiron, toasters, dishpans, drainers, and kettles of blue and white enamel ware. Above and around the sink are more blue and white ware — saucpans, double boilers, strainers, colander, graters, potato masher, lemon squeezer, etc. — all near enough to the range so they are hung up as soon as scalded. It seems a waste of time to put such things over the stove to dry, then later walk with them across the kitchen to a pantry to put them away.

Near the sink, just opposite the range, is the kitchen table, a wide, fixed shelf, and above it are racks and hooks to hold all the kitchen cutlery — knives, forks, and spoons of all sizes, egg beaters, nutmeg grater, corkscrew, skimmers, funnels, chopping knives — all the tools for cooking. Above these are narrow shelves for spice boxes, seasoning herbs, tea caddy, and any materials that can be kept in a warm kitchen. A modern kitchen cabinet that will hold all these things can be bought for twenty dollars. A farmhouse kitchen should have one, unless a "handy man" can build for you such racks and shelves for your tools as you want there. With shelves built over the table, and bins or boxes for flour, grains, cereals, and other supplies built against the kitchen wall and painted with it, you can have quite as great convenience and often better use of your valuable kitchen space, for you must plan above all things to get your kitchen work into a small space for the sake

of saving in cleaning and time, as well as saving steps. If you follow the old plan of pantry, buttery, cold closets, cupboards, dish cupboards, and all, study your



No water can run under the wood box



Linoleum fitted against the wall, page 9

work to see if you can't economize in space. Don't have pantry shelves wide and far apart, with a few small things or double rows. Have shelves to fit the

things to be placed on them; put everything just within your reach where you use it most; and by having a place to "just fit" every tool or box you will find it easier to keep things in order. Many a farmhouse kitchen could be successfully rearranged, so that the work would be easier.

The best floor surface for a kitchen is, undoubtedly, linoleum. Its first cost is too great for any but a small kitchen or a large pocketbook. It wears well and is always easily cleaned by mopping. It can be bought in any width, so that even a large kitchen can have its floor covering in one piece. It is sufficiently flexible to be fitted up against the wall over a wood strip, so that an absolutely sanitary floor is possible. It is thick enough to be warm, and is easier for the feet than any other floor surface.

Oilcloth of good quality, and full width of kitchen, can be used in the same way; but precautions must be taken to make it fit well, and to make perfectly water-tight joints in the corners, or every mopping will send water into the crack to rot the oilcloth and wood and leave its residue of germs to make trouble sometime. Its surface wears out soon, and the worn places should be painted as soon as they appear.¹

A soft wood floor, carefully laid, of narrow boards and painted is the cheapest and most satisfactory floor for the one who has to care for it. The Georgia pine and spruce sliver quickly, and do not wear well unless "rift" boards are used; but North Carolina pine and hard wood (maple, or birch, or oak are best), if cut two

¹ The Care of a House, pp. 222-229.

and a half inches wide, will make a floor that will stand without warping or splintering. A hard wood floor, however, is costly, if laid well, and is a great disappointment often, because if oiled it will surely turn black unless protected by waxing. Painted floors need watching and repairing of worn spots; but if the floor is well laid, the corners and edges well fitted, and the paint of good quality, it is the best surface to work on, and the easiest to keep clean and in good repair.

Woolen rugs should not be found in the kitchen unless frequently washed; not "wiped off," but put into a tub of scalding hot suds. A perforated rubber door mat that lets water and dirt through is better to stand on at the sink.

The kitchen walls, whether of wood or of plaster, should be painted. A good light paint (not ugly drab, or blue, or red) reflects the light so that one can see well in any part of the kitchen, and resists smoke and dirt much better than wall paper. The light paints have more white lead and are much more durable than the darker colors, which are mostly pigment and crumble off in a hot room. Paint may be wiped off easily with a broom covered with a damp cloth, and is made absolutely clean and fresh by scrubbing with a soft floor brush and warm water, with sal soda. This, by the way, is the best way to clean paint; a brush with sal soda solution takes off more dirt and less paint than a cloth and gritty soap, besides being much easier on the hands and back.

There should be as little movable furniture in a kitchen as possible. Two stools, one high enough to

use at the sink, one lower, and a low wood box or coal box, covered to make a comfortable seat, would be enough. The more chairs you have, the more they are left in the way and you have to sweep under them or lift them.

Prepare your vegetables on the back porch, if the weather permits, or at the sink, or on the wood box seat, but have your rocking-chair in the living room, and go there when you want to rest.

A good kitchen table is necessary; but unless the kitchen is large a fixed shelf, twenty to twenty-four inches wide, with grain bins underneath, is better than one with legs. The top of a kitchen table is most attractive if of well-scrubbed pine. White oilcloth on this is easier to keep clean, but have a care for the corners; fit it up against the wall at the back and down over the edge in front. Watch the possible leaks everywhere. But scrubbing a kitchen table top need not be a hard task. Paint everything else. If the vegetables are cleaned at the sink or on a painted shelf, and the meat is cut on its own board and all scraps are kept picked up, the nice white table top will go with one scrubbing and scalding a week. Never wipe it with a greasy or soapy dishcloth; a clean cloth, sal soda, and occasionally sand soap and boiling water are what it needs. Most soaps leave a disagreeable odor, and should always be rinsed out of dishes, clothes, or wood with plenty of hot water.

In the kitchen the "stitch in time saves nine." If a little dirty spot is left it accumulates more dirt, and soon it doesn't seem worth while to clean it up

until the floor is washed or "until cleaning day"; but if each spot on the table or floor or stove is removed at once with hot water or sal soda in water, the whole place is kept clean all the time.

When you come to cleaning day clean wisely rather than too well. Don't spend all your energy in blacking and polishing the stove and scrubbing the table. Look into the corners; see if the water runs under the baseboard or down the pipes. Where does it go? How can you prevent a vile collection of scum and smell in any such crack? Boiling water will kill germs if it is still boiling hot when it reaches them, but remember that floors and walls will cool it quickly. Don't be content with merely cleaning those parts that show. The dirt that is really harmless, that can't get into the food or pollute the air, should wait until the harmful dirt is removed. The gray spots on the hot cover of the stove hurt no one, but spilled milk in a crack or on unclean utensils can.

The washing of milk tools is generally done in the kitchen, and it is better to be near the supply of boiling water. See that all pails, cans, and the separator are flushed with cold water as soon as emptied. The "separator scum" is easily removed in cold water, and is very offensive when mixed with warm water. Then scrub them with a large, stiff-bristled brush and hot water, with sal soda (one pound to twenty gallons of water, or about one ounce—a heaping tablespoonful—to one gallon); then rinse in hot water and scald, or pour plenty of boiling water into each pail and over each part. Don't pour from one pail to

another and call that scalding ; use a fresh supply of boiling water for every one. Nobody's round-ended fingers and a soft cloth can clean the cracks and corners of the separator parts or the big surfaces of pails and cans as well as a stiff-bristled brush. It is really easier, and quicker work, too. But get a good brush ; the difference between fifteen and thirty-five cents isn't great, and the cheap bristles soften in hot water. If enough boiling water is used all the utensils will dry themselves after draining a minute. Stand them on a broad shelf on the south side of the house or in the milk room window where the sun can get *inside*, not bottom up. Be sure it is grassy around the shelf ; a dusty road will do more harm than the sun can correct. Unless the tools are perfectly free from dust they should be rinsed and scalded again before using.

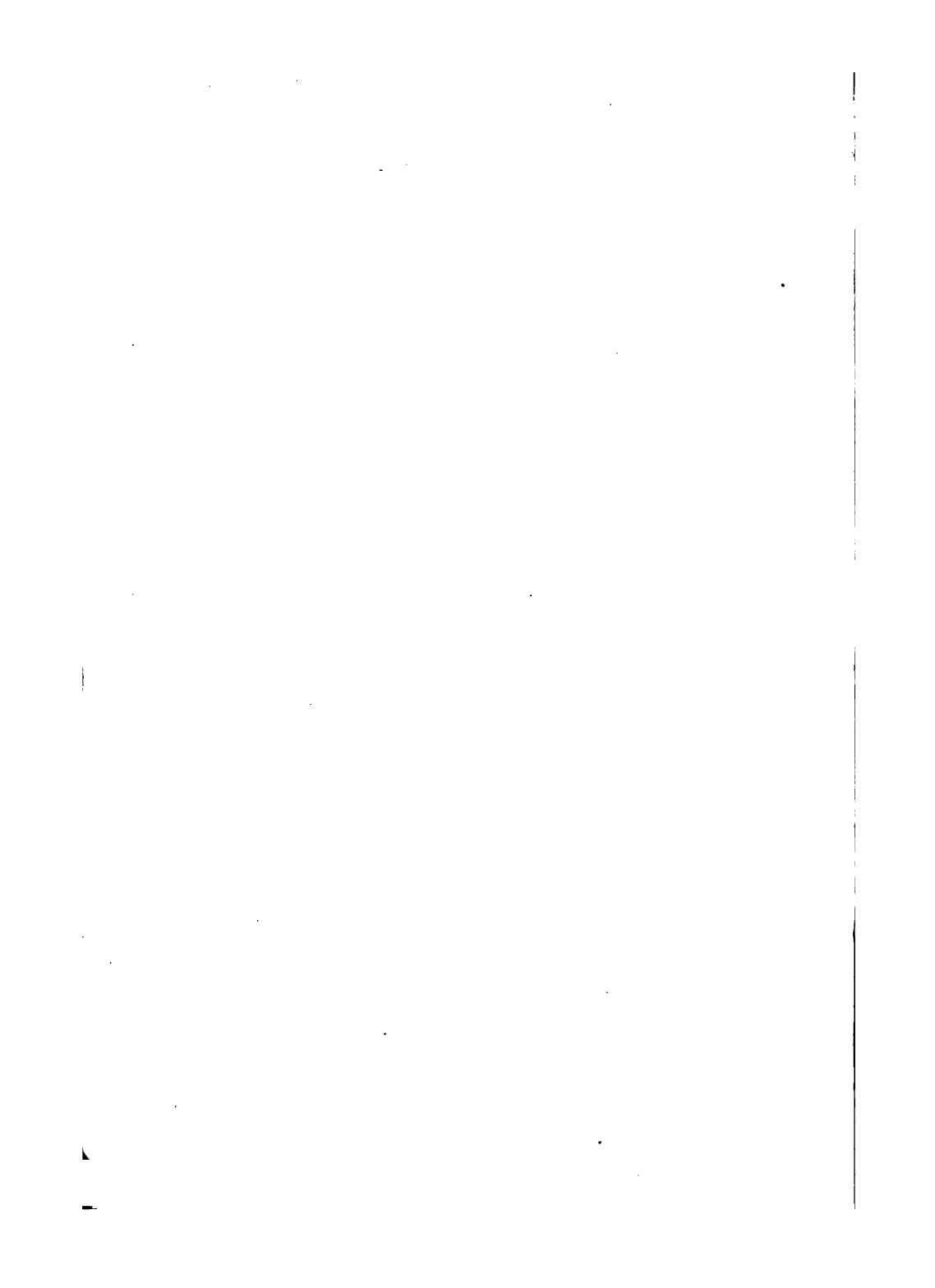
After handling milk tools this way for some years it was gradually forced on my mind that this is about the best way to clean anything. Painted woodwork, windows, cut glass dishes, iron and tin cooking utensils, all are washed cleaner and with less fatigue without the use of any, or very little, sand soap by using hot sal soda suds and a brush, clean, hot, rinsing water, and allowing them practically to dry themselves. Several shapes and sizes of brushes are always at hand—a good, big, stiff one for milk tools (shaped so as to reach every crack of pail or can) ; a small one with a short handle on its back for scrubbing potatoes ; a small one with a long handle for glasses, silver, and dishes with handles and knobby tops ; one

similar, but stiff, for scrubbing the table top, a floor scrubbing brush for woodwork, painted shelves, etc. Most of these cost five or ten cents, are easily dried and sunned, and are much pleasanter to work with, are easier on the hands, and do much better work than the gray or brown bad-smelling old rags used to "clean up round the sink." They had better hang outdoors in the summer time and near the stove where they will dry in the winter.

If the creameries and dairy inspectors demand such care of milk tools, why shouldn't we use the same precautions for the dishes we eat from? The food of the family is the fuel which supplies human power; take time to make it wholesome whether the front hall is dusted or not! Dishes should be carefully "scraped," and if plenty of running water is at hand many of them had better be rinsed first in cold water. Wash them in hot suds. Sal soda and soap make a better suds and cheaper than all soap, especially in hard water. Then rinse them immediately in boiling hot water. It is not sufficient to pour hot water over them. If a dish is washed in lukewarm, not really clean water, and allowed to dry ever so little, it will be sticky and smell of dish-water. Boiling water will not remove greasy suds after cooling. Have water too hot for your hands in a second dishpan and pass each dish directly into it when washed. It will drain dry in a few minutes, and if hung up in a dish-drying rack, so as not to touch the other dishes, it need not be wiped. This process is a great improvement on the old ways of washing dishes, and a great saving of time for the woman who works alone.



Hot water within easy reach, and kettles and spiders put away as scalded



The dish towels that wipe only scalded dishes need less washing and wear longer. Wiping dishes after a washing in hot, clean suds alone is tolerable only when a second person stands by to wipe each dish directly after it is washed, and then the soap must be rinsed out of the towels.¹

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I

1. Is your range the right height for you to work at comfortably?
2. Does it heat water without taking away the heat from the oven and with a reasonable amount of fuel?
3. Is your sink near the range and at just the right height for you?
4. Is the space under the sink open and clean, showing the pipes and trap?
5. Is the sink furnished with a tight drain which will carry the drainage away from the house, instead of depositing it under the windows to become offensive and possibly cause disease?
6. Have you a table or fixed shelf on *each side* of your sink for stacking and draining dishes?
7. Is the kitchen table near the sink and the range?
8. Are all the cooking materials and tools near the kitchen table and also near the sink?
9. If any are kept in a cupboard, could that be moved nearer to your table and sink?
10. Are the tools hung on separate hooks or kept in distinct places of their own?

¹ For more comprehensive schemes of plumbing than are outlined here see *The Care of a House*, pp. 43-47, 131-138, 168-180; also *The Farmstead*, pp. 212-217.

11. Is every tool where you can easily reach it without hunting in drawers or dark cupboards?
12. Is the floor of hard wood, or painted, or covered with linoleum?
13. Is there any furniture in the kitchen that *you* do not need?
14. Is there a convenient stool and seat to use while doing tedious work?
15. Are the walls painted or whitewashed?
16. Do you have plenty of hot water for dish-washing?
17. Do you rinse or scald off the soapy water from *everything* you wash?
18. Are the milk tools washed immediately after using, scalded, and sunned out of doors?
19. Is all garbage and waste water removed quickly from the kitchen?
20. Are flies kept out of the kitchen and away from food and every utensil?
21. Have you a convenient place for the men to wash, so that they need not use the kitchen sink?

CHAPTER II

THE SHED

ON most farms there is a long list of rooms, passageways, sheds, and separate outbuildings that are not part of the house and do not belong to the barn. When a thing is "too dirty to come into the house" it is left in the shed—rubber boots and fur overcoats, milk cans and washing tools, soiled clothes and other unmentionables crowd each other in a dark, untidy place. It is a country the men folk do not respect and the women folk despair of cleaning up. What is to be done with such a place? The tidiest housekeeper knows some spot "out back" she is ashamed of. The best way often is to destroy entirely the old buildings and build a clean new "ell," with a small summer kitchen that serves as laundry too, a woodshed used for nothing else, an open walk or passageway, and an isolated milk room, with wide windows and shelves on the south side for sunning the milk tools. Farm machinery, carriages, and garden tools should not be under the house roof.

If you must go on using the old shed make it reasonable; don't live with one you are ashamed of. A new window or two, even small old ones, may be put into the dark side of the shed, and give a surprising amount of light, besides much better ventilation. Take every boot, rubber, overshoe, old coat, and other

garment out into the sunshine ; clean them and decide which are possible for wear, and throw the useless rubber things into a barrel for the next peddler. Burn the rest. Collect the washtubs, wringer, washing machine, etc, and let them stand outdoors a while. Put the good bottles with the preserve jars for ketchup and pickle time ; gather the hopeless ones for the peddler. Put away or destroy *everything* that is not used at least once a week. Sweep down the dust and cobwebs, pull out rusty or broken nails, and sweep the floor. Then take a pail of clean-looking, light-colored paint (good ready-mixed paint can be bought for \$1.25 or \$1.35 a gallon, according to the price of oil), and *paint*.

Paint the walls, the window sashes ; paint "everything in sight." Paint the underside of every shelf you need (rip off the others). Use the paint thin enough so that it will run into the cracks of your old boards, fill the cracks behind the shelves, and run down into the cracks at the floor. Then paint the floor (a light brown, yellow ocher, or dust gray). The smell of the turpentine will drive away every fly and every bug and every ant that threatened you, and rats won't like the taste of the corners.

When the paint is dry put up a few strong hooks for coats, overalls, and such things near the door, and some brass hooks under a shelf on the other side of the door to hold lanterns ; make a tidy arrangement of starch boxes, soap, etc, on the painted shelves, an orderly row of washtubs, bench, etc, on one side, and some bright, clean windows on the other ; and you'll find no

more bits of harnesses, nor dirty boots, nor ill-smelling garbage pails will be left close to your kitchen door! Paint is the greatest help to the housekeeper. One gallon, with some added turpentine, would renovate a big shed of the roughest possible boards, and such painted boards are easily washed with a broom; the paint is a good disinfectant, too. No farmer's wife ought to spend any of her precious strength scrubbing a shed floor, yet she wants a clean place to do her washing, and two coats of paint make a very rough old floor easy to clean.

But is the shed floor tight? How much water has been spilled there since you have known it? Where did it go? What is the condition of the dirt underneath? Does it never smell sour or musty? Do the planks rest on the ground or are they up on beams, so that plenty of air can circulate underneath? A sandy or gravelly soil sloping enough to drain will soon be found sweet, if plenty of air can blow through under the floor.

If there is such an abomination as an old wooden slop hopper in the shed or near the door, the only thing to do is to rip it up and burn it at once. A convenient place to empty the washtubs and slop water must be provided, but don't use an old one. Wood absorbs anything left upon it—water, milk, oil, or grease—and before being used for drains and hoppers must be painted. A shed drain ought to run out into a long, wooden trough that can have one end moved occasionally, that the water may not saturate the ground in any one place. The wood for the

trough and hopper should be "filled" with preservative or *good paint* on all sides before being put together, then painted again after finishing. There are several "wood preservatives" on the market. The cheap ones are a kind of tar paint; the good ones are made of creosote. Such a trough that empties itself, exposed to the open air and sunshine, can be called sanitary. Don't cover it, and don't let the ground get soggy. Keep shifting it, and you will find a rich growth of grass will follow it. If water has been poured out on the ground at the back door and the surface of the earth has become hard packed (even moldy or mossy on the north side sometimes), see to it that no more water is *ever* thrown there. Scatter a liberal dose of chloride of lime on the ground, and if you don't like the smell shut the doors and windows on that side. Then have all the soaked dirt thoroughly spaded up (it won't take long), and leave it in lumps for a week. By that time the sun and the air will have worked on the soil sufficiently to enable you to "work it"; that is, break up the lumps with a hoe or a rake, and smooth it off. This will make the finest flower bed you have; scarlet runner beans, poppies (if it is sunny on the south, or pansies if on the east or north side), dahlias, and mignonette will make a beauty spot out of an eyesore. If you don't care to plant the flowers, sow some white clover and June grass seed, and you will have a dainty lawn. Red clover will get ahead of weeds quicker than anything else.

But whatever else you think of improving about

your house, tackle the sink drain outlet and the place where slops are thrown *first*. The worst smelling drain outlet is fit to work about soon after scattering chloride of lime; and a man or boy ought to be willing to spade for you if he knows that a rich crop of clover for calves or hens will be the result. Plant *something* as soon as the ground is worked. Tomato plants will take a great deal of filth out of the ground even if they produce no fruit.

Passageways are dangerous and usually unnecessary. Often it is better to tear out a partition and take the passage into an adjoining room. You won't leave a mop and an old broom and a pair of rubbers in it if you can see them all the time. Mops should hang in the sun summer and winter. Have two in cold weather; and when one is frozen and sweetened and pretty dry hang it, mop end up, in the dry heat of the kitchen, while the other hangs outdoors; but don't hang a wet one where anybody can smell it. Brooms should have screw eyes or leather thongs in the end of the handles to hang them up by. A good shed broom can be made by chopping off the uneven, soft ends of a worn house broom. It will be stiff, with a thick, even sweeping surface, and much lighter than such a stiff one new would be.

Shed pantries are a delusion and a snare. A good store closet is needed somewhere, but if you can have enough bins and convenient places in your kitchen you will save steps by abolishing the shed pantry. A cupboard to keep little used iron kettles, paring machines, meat choppers, pails of lard, etc, may be tolerated; but

beware of such a place, for it gets to be a catch-all very easily. In any case the things had better be near the kitchen range if possible. Any cupboard needs ventilation all the time. Some of the door panels might well be taken out and wire screens, or cheese cloth substituted, or wire panels at the top and bottom of the back, if it stands away from the wall. But watch for the smell as you open the door. If you don't like it you should not keep cooking utensils there.

A shed ought to have a "back porch," roofed, where you can prepare vegetables, prepare fruit for canning, wash and sun the milk things, and escape for rest from the heated kitchen for a minute. It will add greatly to your comfort and your cheerfulness. You will be surprised to see how much cleaner you want things when you work out of doors, and how much rested you are when the peas are shelled.

SEPARATE MILK ROOM

The milk should be kept separate from everything else. It ought not to be near the stables or near the smells of cooking. A separate building is best if there is a covered way leading to it. But a farm milk room need not be large, and it is kept cleaner if under the house roof. The ideal milk room has windows or doors on all sides, but plenty of windows on the south side anyway. It has a cement floor laid on small stones on the ground, with a smooth surface, inclined so that every drop of water spilled can run out through a short tile drain to the open air; it has a large tank of running water in which cans of milk and cream

and water-tight boxes for butter can be kept cool. It has separator, butter worker, and churn all hung from the ceiling or walls, so that the floor is kept free to clean. If an engine is used it should be outside the milk room, and connected with shafting and pulleys at the ceiling. Every surface, window frames, shelves, walls, ceiling, all but the cement floor should be painted white—matched boards with a smooth surface (not beaded) are the best finish.

If the cement floor is impossible, a well-laid double floor with waterproof paper between and a thoroughly painted surface will do. It should be, however, inclined to let the water run off, or sometimes the cracks will be soaked and the boards contaminated. Unless you can frequently turn a jet of steam into it, the tile drain outlet should be not more than eighteen or twenty inches long. This may empty into an open trough that may be easily shifted, as described before, and it should be frequently cleaned out with hot water and sal soda and scalded.

Much as a separate milk room is needed, many farmers will not provide it. It is possible to stand the separator in the shed, and keep a better place clean for separating than any barn can be. Make a light partition, head-high, about one of the windows, or at least keep everything six feet or more from the separator. Allow nothing to stay in the shed that has a bad odor. Be sure that every bit of floor or wall or wooden surface near the separator is smooth and painted before it is spattered with oil or milk. Any such spatterings should be wiped off each time

the separator is used, before they "dry on." It will be an easy matter then to wash down the walls and separator frames occasionally, and by yourself watching the cloths used for "rubbing off," you can be sure that ill-smelling and oily ones are promptly removed and fresh ones put in place. Where cotton waste, such as engineers use, can be procured, there is a great saving in washing, since it is burned at once.

Whether the milk things are washed in the dairy room or kitchen depends upon the supply of running water and of hot water. It is usually easier to do them near the stove and hot water, if the cans are not too heavy to empty easily. But wherever you wash them do it as described in Chapter I.¹

QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER II

1. Is there anything in your shed that is not needed there?
2. Are the walls and floor painted or smooth enough to be occasionally scrubbed?
3. Is the shed floor water-tight?
4. Is the water from washing easily removed?
5. Are you sure the drain is *safe*?
6. If there is no drain, are you careful not to throw the washing water and slops on the same spot next the house?
7. Is there a dark entry or passageway that could be taken into a larger room? Or can you put a window in it?

¹ United States Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletins on Care of Milk, and Wisconsin Bulletins on Dairy Cleanliness.

8. If there is a pantry or cupboard in the shed do you really need it? Is it ventilated?
9. Is the milk room separate? If not, is the separator in a clean, open space near a window?
10. Are the walls and floor about the milk tools painted and frequently washed?

CHAPTER III

THE CELLAR

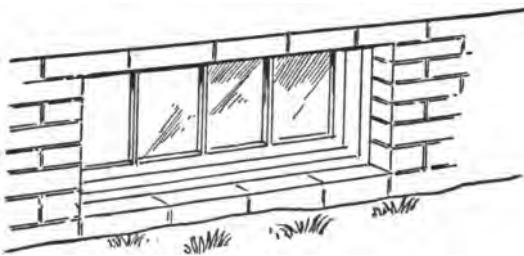
THE farmhouse cellar must be more than a store-room for fruit, vegetables, preserves, and other food. It is a protection for the house from the moisture of the ground, the cold of the snow, and penetrating winds. If the sills are painted and laid in cement on the cellar wall, the house is much warmer in severely cold or windy weather, and a wooden house with a cellar will last much longer than one built on the ground. A heated house acts like a chimney. Not only does it draw air in from the ground through the cellar walls and floor, unless they are made with cement, but the movement of the air is from the bottom upwards, and the air of the cellar makes its way into every part of the house. The dark streaks on the plastered ceilings are formed by the dust in the air as it passes through the plastering.

These facts prove the necessity for especially considering the cellar as a reservoir of air for the whole house; and there is little use in adopting special methods of ventilation for the living rooms if foul air is allowed constantly to rise from the cellar. During most of the year plenty of air should blow through the cellar through screened open windows.

In this chapter and in the following one many of the points may appear unnecessary, or the risk to

health, in ignoring them, very slight; but the sum of such trifles often makes the difference between physical vigor and weakness, and the risk, small as it is, is greater and more serious than that from fire, against which the farmer always insures himself.

One of the most dangerous qualities of the unhealthful house is that it does not always and at once produce a definite disease, such as typhoid fever or diphtheria, though such is often its result; but it slowly and insidiously causes ill health and general



Cellars need bigger windows

weakness, to which women, from their greater confinement to the house, are especially subject. Even after making the cellar or whole house sanitary, it must be kept so. Cleanliness and pure air will usually make it safe, but it takes eternal vigilance to keep things clean and to keep the fresh air moving through.

The cellar must have openings, doors or windows, on different sides to make a cross draught possible. The windows should be as large as possible. Where the sills of the house are only a short distance above the ground, larger windows can be made by digging the earth away from the outside of the cellar

wall and laying brick *in cement* about a little area. Such an arrangement would let more than twice as much light into the cellar, because the wall and the inside of the area can be whitewashed and so reflect more light than the growing grass would allow to pass. All the windows in the cellar should be carefully screened, not merely to keep cats out, but to guard against the malarial mosquitoes.

In the North houses are set close to the ground



This window gives more light and air

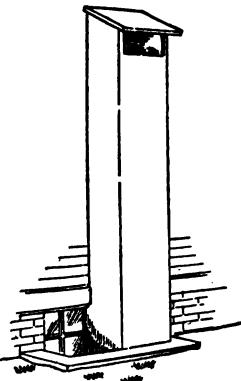
because of the warmth to be gained by a low, inclosed cellar, but such cellars need bigger windows, as illustrated, and often a ventilating shaft would be a safeguard.

The best authorities state that the house cellar is no place for fruit or vegetables. Apples require a very cold, moist place to keep well; potatoes must have a sweet, clean, dry but perfectly dark room; and all other vegetables will contaminate the air of your house unless buried in sand and kept in a well-ventilated room. Yet the Northern farmer's wife cannot go to

the barn or root cellar for every day's dinner. A large stock of vegetables must be provided for outside the house, but a small store can be kept with safety this way: Shut off one end of your cellar with a tight partition covered with wire lathing and Portland cement plaster. Cover the floor beams above with the same; have the door into this small room fit well; cover part of the window to make it dark; and outside the other part build a ventilating shaft of wood, air-tight, which will carry away the bad air arising from the decaying vegetables outside the house to the roof, above any windows. Then, if your vegetables are kept in barrels of sand, they will keep well, and so will you! Every spring all boxes, barrels, and vegetables must be taken out and the cellar walls whitewashed.

Whitewashing with lime, leveling the floor, tamping and covering it with several inches of clean, dry sand, and constant ventilation will do much to make an old cellar safe to live over until you can make it better. Lime has wonderful "sweetening" power, and it should be used more all about the farm.

The ideal cellar will be as light and dry and clean as any room in the house. The walls and floor are covered with hydraulic cement (Portland cement, the only kind that will keep out moisture). The windows are large, are on different sides, and may be opened



The shaft

easily. The walls are free from dust and cobwebs, and look attractive in their coat of whitewash. It will take much work to achieve such a cellar from the dark, rough stone walls and soggy dirt floor of many farmhouse cellars; but it is good investment of time and money, for it will be repaid in the better health of the family and the lessened work of the succeeding years.¹

QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER III

1. Is there a cellar or ventilated air space under the whole house?
2. Is the cellar perfectly dry at all seasons of the year?
3. Are the floors and sides cemented?
4. If not, is the floor leveled and covered with several inches of clean sand?
5. Is the cellar thoroughly cleaned and whitewashed with lime every spring?
6. Has the cellar several windows on opposite sides so that it is light and well aired?
7. Is care taken to keep the ground outside the cellar windows free from any contamination?
8. Are these windows screened?
9. If vegetables are kept in the cellar are they in a small room, inclosed, walls and ceiling, with hydraulic cement, and ventilated?

¹The Country Home, pp. 41-43.

CHAPTER IV

VENTILATION

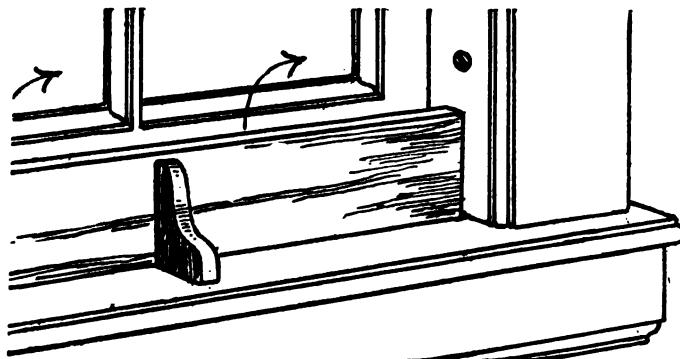
THREE is no excuse for bad air in a farmhouse. In the open country fresh air at least is easily provided. In fact, in wooden houses too much air is the fear throughout the winter. More air than we realize comes through the walls of the house and around the windows and doors, but the farmhouse problem is how to get the bad air *out*.

An open fireplace is the best solution. An open fire draws the air of the room toward it, and its escape up the chimney keeps the air purer and fresher than is possible in any other way. The main principle of ventilation is circulation; that is, a constant change of air in any one place. An open fireplace, even without a fire, carries off a large amount of impure air; but a window open at the top will do it, too.

Every room should have at least one window so arranged that it can easily be let down about six inches from the top. Where there is only one window, as in many farmhouse bedrooms, it should be opened a little at the top to let used-up air out, and at the bottom to let fresh air in. This will make "circulation." In winter it is well to put a board against the opening at the bottom so as to send the current of fresh air up into the room instead of making a draught across it; or coarse flannel, or cheese

cloth, on a small frame like a fly screen, can be put under the window.

There should be, beside the outlets for impure air



Put a board against the opening

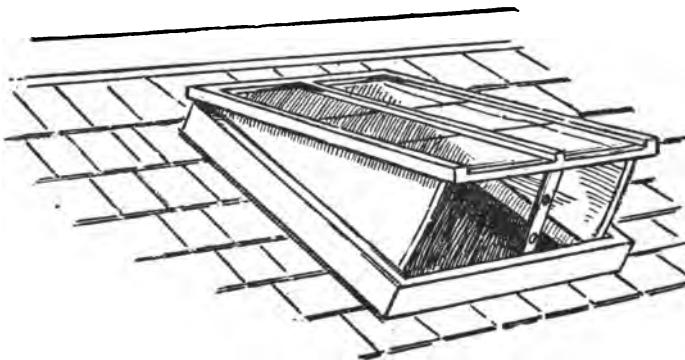


The flannel or cheese cloth screen

in the rooms of the house, a general outlet at the roof. A scuttle, or skylight, is good, except in very windy weather. If on the opposite side of the roof from the

prevailing winds, and hinged at the top so as to be opened a little, it will make a very good outlet, and will not generally cause any down draught.

In a room that is used by many people, or that is likely to get very hot, as in the kitchen, a cross draught is necessary; that is, a window should be opened at the bottom on one side of the room, and one should be opened at the top on the other side. Often the



kitchen has a narrow window over the door, which with hinges at the bottom and hooks or string at the top will make an outlet for the heated air without any down draught. This top outlet should always be provided when cooking is going on, for it is this heated air at the top of the kitchen that will carry unpleasant odors and smoke all through the house. If the bad air can possibly escape outdoors from the top of the kitchen or living room window, its place is immediately filled by fresh air from the cracks around the windows.

Strong draughts are to be guarded against, not only because of the discomfort they cause, but because they may keep the used-up air from finding the outlet you have provided for it. If a gust of wind sweeps through the house when the kitchen door is opened, see if the shed doors are shut, or if there are not some big openings in the partitions above the shed door.

Keeping the rooms all open throughout the house greatly aids the circulation of air. Warmer bedrooms and cooler sitting rooms would make healthier children. Besides, it takes less fuel to make fresh air feel warm than to make stale air feel warm. Cold halls make it hard to ventilate a house. Where the upstairs part is little used, or where the upstairs bedrooms have furnace heat or their own stoves, it is well to make a door across the bottom of the stairway and open the doors into the hall. In that way, by shutting off the draught from the stairs, the whole living floor of the house can be kept at the same temperature.

The important objects of ventilation are:

- I. To provide an abundance of pure air.
- II. To avoid draughts, either warm or cold.
- III. To provide means of escape for foul air and odors.

Time and money spent in providing good ventilation will be well invested, for every member of the family will feel an increase in vigor, comfort, and cheerfulness.

QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER IV

1. Are all living rooms and sleeping rooms thoroughly aired at least once a day?
2. Are the windows so placed as to make a draught possible when a quick change of air is needed?
3. Is there a skylight at the top of the house as an outlet for impure air?
4. If such a skylight is impracticable, can a window in the top story be kept open a little most of the time?
5. Are the outside or double windows made with movable panes, so as to admit a current of air when desired?
6. Is at least one window in each room arranged so that it can be lowered easily from the top?
7. When a sleeping room is used as a sewing room or sitting room during the day, is it thoroughly aired before bedtime?
8. In cold weather do you hang a piece of cotton cloth over the opening of each bedroom window, or place a board against the window, or put a screen before the window to break the force of the current of air?
9. Do you open the chamber windows as soon as you are dressed? Do you at the same time open the closet door?
10. Are the living rooms kept at a temperature not exceeding 70° F.?
11. Does the member of the family who is the last to retire thoroughly air the room where the family have been sitting through the evening, in order

that the foul air may not have a chance to make its way through the house during the night?

12. Has the kitchen adequate arrangements for constant ventilation and occasional airing?

13. Do you keep a window lowered a little from the top or keep the transom over the door open?

CHAPTER V

THE DINING ROOM

WHETHER you eat in the kitchen or in a separate dining room the main questions are the same. Often a very big kitchen could be divided into a little convenient kitchen and a more attractive dining room. A separate dining room is much easier to keep clean than part of a big kitchen. See that everything has its place; that is, the place where it is easiest to put it away, to be reached when needed, to be kept clean. If it isn't easy to keep things clean they gradually get dirty, or the housekeeper grows tired and old too soon.

A floor painted all over is surely best where there are children. Older children and grown-ups can have a rug under the table, but it should be frequently cleaned; wash every place where food drops. The rugs should be small enough to go out of doors easily, and not to be in the way of moving chairs and spilled milk. The woodwork and wall paper should be cheerful in color, and with such surfaces as can be easily cleaned; both painted woodwork and plain-colored papers will stand having grease spots and fly specks removed with sal soda. The table should be solid and level, and not "teetery." When the table top is of smooth-finished hard wood it will look much prettier between meal times if left bare, with a growing plant or a bunch of flowers on a mat in the middle of it.

Most of the dish closets in the farmhouse are suitable only for storing little used dishes in. The dishes used every day are much more easily put away and taken to the table if kept on open, narrow shelves against the wall of the dining room. Since they are used every day or two they won't get dusty, and are a great help in decorating the dining room. Even if they do get dusty, it is easier to remove the dust from a dish used only occasionally than to put all the dishes into an inconvenient cupboard. Such shelves should be made just wide enough for the dishes and be at least a half inch from the wall. Corners at the back get dusty, and are hard to clean or paint or stain. Have one of these convenient dish shelves extend across the window which connects with the kitchen. With such an arrangement very little walking to and from the dining table is needed.

Under the dish shelves some cupboards, narrow, with shelves just wide enough for your large plates, set out an inch from the wall, will be found most convenient for bread, cake, bits of left-over preserves, etc. They will be cooler and nearer the table than in the kitchen. Such cupboards should be painted inside with light-colored paint. Glasses can be kept behind doors, but be sure you don't have to open and shut too many doors "doing up your work."

Just a word against the almost universal farm custom of keeping a table set all the time. It takes no more work, if the shelves and cupboards are near at hand, to clear a table entirely after each meal than it does to "fix up" properly, leaving the cloth and many things



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in place. Everything about the table seems fresher and more inviting if it is just laid. What is more disgusting than to sit at a table where any sign whatever remains of the meal before? An accidental spot may be carefully concealed by a cloth laid over it, but one of the children will rub it up and disclose the hidden fact. But changing the cloth seemed to be too much trouble with that assortment of spoonholders, salt shakers, tumblers, etc., in the middle of it. It is a mistaken idea that it saves work to let linen become soiled. Better do without tablecloths altogether than to use one soiled or without a "silence" cloth underneath.

If the family is not too large and noisy, eating from a bare table is the most attractive and labor-saving fashion possible in the farm dining room. Instead of a tablecloth have for each place a doily made from outworn white tablecloths, or a long scarf across from "father's to mother's place" and doilies for the others. Little, round, crocheted macramé mats for each plate, for each cup and saucer, and for the serving dishes will keep the table quiet and dainty in appearance. By setting the places evenly, taking pains that the serving dishes, salt and pepper and bread things are in line in the center of the table, and putting a dish of flowers in the middle, a prettier table can be set than is found in most farmhouses; and after the food and dishes are removed, the little mats shaken and put away, the table is washed or wiped with a damp cloth, no grease spots left, no crumbs under the sugar bowl, no water left soaking

into the table top, and — no more long tablecloths to "do up!" If you haven't a genius for setting things straight, cultivate it, and practice setting things in line; but if once tried this plan is never given up. What is good enough for luncheon and breakfast in the finest houses need not look poverty stricken or like camping out in a farmhouse.

If the family is too large or too conservative for such a scheme, and you must use a tablecloth, remove it at least once a day, and change it when soiled. Don't try to cover up dirt anywhere. A red tablecloth seems to keep clean longer, but it shows grease spots more than a white one and is much harder to iron. Where there is a washing machine the white cloths seem easier, because more pleasant to handle. Better use a clean cloth without ironing than one even slightly soiled. No two women think just alike about housework, and no woman wants to change "her way"; but many put too much energy into ironing table linen that ought to be spent in studying out easier or better ways of caring for it. Many others, however, neglect the making of a table attractive who scrub a kitchen floor oftener than need be. If tablecloths and napkins are brought in with some of the outdoor air and dampness in them, carefully stretched and folded, very little ironing will suffice and it is better to use clean napkins without ironing than none at all. Teach the children to be careful and dainty and the washing needn't trouble you; and if you show them that you take pains to keep the table tidy and attractive they will respect it and help. Use the children's steps to save yours and to interest

them. My boy of six will clear away a table as daintily as I, and with a few reminders set it, every fork and spoon straight and in its place. He enjoys it, too, because he knows he can do it "just the way you do!" We eat three times a day, every day of the three hundred and sixty-five, and it seems rather more important to keep the table up to a dainty standard than to wash the parlor windows, clean and dust the room, and then shut it up again! And don't be in a hurry to leave your attractive table. Take time to eat slowly and show enjoyment of each other's interests. After dinner a bit of rest is good for all, and the pleasantest times for the children to remember in later years are the talks that can come around the table.¹

QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER V

1. Is the floor of hard wood or painted?
2. Are the rugs easily moved and frequently cleaned outside the house?
3. Are the walls finished with paint or smooth paper?
4. Is there a window into the kitchen with a wide shelf on both sides?
5. Are the dishes on the side of the room nearest the kitchen window, in order to save steps in putting away?
6. If not, can't you plan another arrangement of dishes that will be more convenient?
7. Is the table entirely cleared after each meal, or once a day?

¹The Country Home, pp. 44, 45, 221-228.

8. Are the tablecloth and napkins changed as soon as soiled?

9. Is the dining room cheerful? If not, what does it lack?

10. Can you put in another window? Or put a yellow or other bright paper on the walls?

11. Would a double door into the living room make it more cheerful, or more easily warmed in winter?

CHAPTER VI

THE LIVING ROOM

THE farmhouse living room ought to be the largest and lightest room in the house. Plenty of sunshine and plenty of fresh air it needs. Everything in it must have its own place; a few movable chairs, of course, but "father's chair" and "mother's chair" should have their recognized places near the table and reading lamp. The baby's playthings must go back into their corner at night, the boy's books must have their place on the shelves, the couch or big seat should be kept clear of sewing, books, or coats; everything should be ready to use, yet not in the way. By studying the needs and pleasure of every member of the family, and keeping the living room furniture and fittings to conform to them, we can build up a "homey" place that will reflect the atmosphere of the family life, that will truly represent the character of the farm, that will mean "home" to every child brought up in it, and will rest and comfort the housekeeper as no other room can. So choose carefully whatever you put into it. Try to put into it a fireplace, a few good books, some musical instruments, a fine picture, or photographs of fine ones, a big seat or couch, and some comfortable cushions, a steady table, and good lamp; then, if the room is of fair size, it will look cheerful and like a living room, even with a basket of mending on the

table, the baby's blocks on the floor, and a small boy's soldiers on the window sill.¹

Unless the floor is hard wood, oiled and waxed or varnished, it is better painted *all over*. Rugs, such as you can make or afford to buy, will be much easier to clean and often prettier than a carpet; but if you must use a carpet paint the floor first, and tack the carpet about twenty inches from the wall. Dark reds and browns are pleasant to live with, but show dust and tracks much more than greens, greenish-grays, or light brown.

Wall paper should be of plain color, or very simple design. When one is tired it "worries him" to follow a pattern; pictures never look well against uneasy wall papers streaked with gilt, and a room seems much smaller if the walls are confusing. A bright, light color—red, brown, yellow, or green—in cartridge paper costs less than many "patterns," and will do more to make your living room airy and cheerful than any other one thing. Have only a few pictures—those dignified and as good as you can afford. Life-size portraits are not usually agreeable companions, even if they are fine oil paintings; they need a big space; and *don't* hang up calendars! One calendar, easily seen, may be near the desk for convenience, but the magnificent ones sent out every year as advertisements are of little use as decoration. If they please you, and you like the picture well enough to put it on your wall and live with it a year, don't hang it where it looks too big and will be crooked most of the time, but

¹ The Country Home, pp. 46-48.

cut it out and tack it on a mat of good color against the wall. Many famous paintings have been reproduced for calendars, and are well suited to such a use, but be careful that your calendar picture is not too glaring in color and subject for your living room.

The farmhouse living room should be different from town sitting rooms. It is the business of the farm to grow things, to produce rather than to buy. It is a great mistake to buy furniture at the store just like that used in small city "flats" because it is cheap. Every bit of furniture in a farmhouse should be simple, strong, restful to look at, and easy to clean. The old Colonial style has never been improved upon. The furniture used in fine farmhouses one or two hundred years ago is today the most beautiful and most fitting. Straight, smooth surfaces, removable cushions, strong legs, and well-made joints — how many chairs bought nowadays in country or city stores have them? Many a man can make with saw, hammer, and chisel chairs better suited to his own and his wife's comfort than any he can afford to buy. If we had fewer chairs, better made, and more window seats (just boxes two feet by five, thirteen inches high, with straw-stuffed cushions on top), we and our children should be more comfortable. Remember, too, that the living room must do more than reflect your life as it is, or make you comfortable; it must hold ideals for your children. A boy does not respect a chair made of "rotten" wood; he doesn't care for books that are too "nice" for him to read at any time (when his hands are clean); he doesn't keep newspapers, magazines, and books on the table in order

unless he finds them so; but he will love a room and the people in it, if he feels that you respect each article and plan for the comfort and pleasure of everyone.

The less that is hung in windows the better. Lace curtains hanging to the floor have no place in a farmhouse. Thin ones that hang straight, not "looped back," just inside the window frame are good, but they should be on rings on a rod that slide easily. Curtains made of thin lawn or dimity are much prettier and often cheaper than "shade rollers," and will entirely fill their place.

Keeping such a room clean is a very simple matter. All rugs, chair cushions, pillows, and stuffed chairs, and heavy curtains, if there are any, are carried outdoors on a breezy, sunny day, beaten, swept, and left outside as long as practicable. Enough windows should be opened to make a good draught. Walls are wiped with a wall mop (made by tying a cloth or Canton flannel bag over the broom), shelves and chairs are dusted, and the floor carefully swept. If no carpet or stuffy things are left in the room no dust will be raised.

It may seem unnecessary to dust both before and after sweeping, but, as a rule, farmhouse chairs and shelves accumulate gritty dust or ashes that really ought to go out with the sweepings. There must be a final dusting of everything — woodwork, furniture, and floor (wash the floor if it is painted). Then the freshened things from outdoors will fill the room with a sweetness not found in carpeted houses.

It will stay clean long enough to pay for the extra trouble, too. How often this thorough cleaning should take place depends on nearness to the dusty road, on the number in the family, and on the daily care. With daily watchfulness and a small family once a month will do, but I find once a week necessary when the room is much used in the winter months. With the children to help tote, it seems easier to sweep with the movable things outdoors, and there is never any confused house-cleaning. Doing the living room and dining room one day, the bedrooms on another, and the kitchen and shed on still another keeps one from unnecessary fatigue.¹

QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER VI

1. Is the floor of hard wood or painted?
2. Are the rugs easily carried out to be beaten and swept?
3. In case rugs or carpets covering only a portion of the floor are not used, are the edges of the carpet frequently cleaned with a damp cloth after sweeping?
4. Since dust sifts through mattings or loosely woven carpets, are the floors laid with closely matched boards?
5. Are the walls frequently dusted with a wall mop?
6. Are the windows so curtained as to permit free admission of sunlight and to offer scant hospitality to dust?

¹The Farmstead, pp. 193, 203. The Care of a House, pp. 209-222.

7. Are hangings and draperies so arranged as to be easily taken down and shaken?
8. Are there neither furniture nor ornaments which cannot be properly cared for by daily dusting?
9. If there is a wood box, is it painted or varnished inside and frequently cleaned out?
10. Is there anything in the room you or the family find inconvenient, ugly, or hard to keep clean? Why not remove it?

CHAPTER VII

BEDROOMS

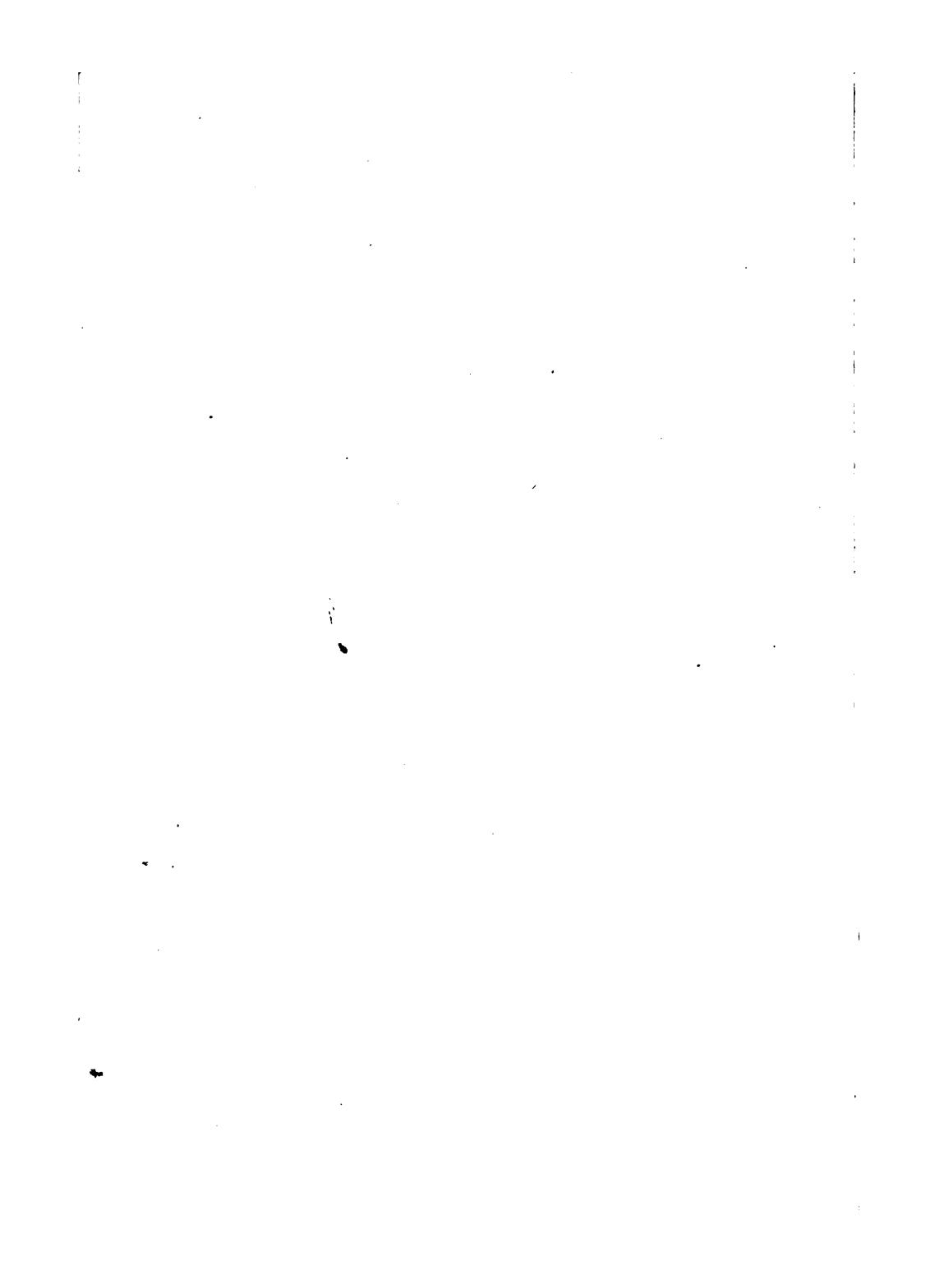
SIMPLICITY in furniture and decoration is the first need in a bedroom. Have a painted floor—if you can have hard wood so much the better—with a small rug or two. A carpet under the bed means a back-breaking job of moving the bed or sweeping under it every time you sweep and a struggle at house-cleaning time. Everything in the bedroom should be washable or easily cleaned. If lint flies to the bare floor under the bed, you see it and can clean it up easily; but in the shadow on a carpet, how can you? Rugs can go outdoors for sunning, and bedroom fittings need sun as much as others. For that reason, if for no other, blankets are better than the "puffs" and "comforters" used. Woolen blankets, or wool and cotton, last for more than one generation if properly cared for, freshen up a room amazingly after hanging outdoors on a sunny, breezy day, and can be easily washed and rinsed in a washing machine. But have soft, light ones; they are warmer than the stiff, coarse kind and last longer. If you must use "puffs" have a cheese cloth or thin cover, not a harsh, impenetrable cotton one that sunlight and fresh air can get through. The coverlet or spread should keep the dust out of it. When our grandmothers pieced quilts they used soft cotton stuff and quilted them, instead of making puffs out of stiff prints.

An old-fashioned, painted washstand, open all around, is much more sanitary than the more modern commode. If a closed-in stand or commode is used it should go outdoors occasionally for a careful cleaning, drying, and sunning. When dry and sweet-smelling, paint and varnish it inside. It will be less likely to hold bad odors. The average bedroom is an uncomfortable place in which to bathe, so the washing accommodations should be small and simple. The white enameled iron stands, such as are used in hospitals, are most sanitary, but if you buy cheap ones you must keep them in repair and repaint them occasionally.

The most important part of the care of the bedroom, however, is the daily airing and constant ventilation of it. This point is where farmhouse keepers fall below their city sisters' standards. Because the farm bedrooms are often cold the bad air is not noticeable, but unless ventilated as described in Chapter IV no room that one or two persons have slept in is fit to use again until all the air has been changed. One of the first lessons physiology teaches us is that our bodies rebuild themselves during sleep. This repairing of the body through the breathing fills the air with carbonic acid gas and organic impurities. The night clothing and bed clothing hold such impurities as come from the breath and the perspiration, and the impure matter in the air of the room will "settle" and stick to the walls and furniture, as well as to the clothing. Fresh air, frequent dusting, and much sunshine entirely remove and destroy such impurities. A well-known authority states that "breathing impure air is a prolific cause of catarrhal colds

"The green bedroom"





and sore throats; it predisposes a child to tonsilitis, bronchitis, and pneumonia; and as a result of lowered vitality there is less resistance to the contagious diseases." So in your bedrooms, especially, keep plenty of fresh air; sun the night clothes, pillows, and other bedding out of doors, and don't shut the bedroom doors, even at night, unless you have provided for good ventilation.

Some one will say, "If we do everything as carefully as we are told we can never get our work done." True, too. But keep a high standard before you. If the family is large, and one woman works alone, she cannot do everything as well as her neighbor, whose "big girls" help. Then teach the children to open their beds, put the pillows in chairs near the open windows, and open the closet door as soon as they are dressed. Even the hired man will do this much for you if he knows it is the "rule of the house." At all events, try to do the thing that is of great importance to the welfare of your family. Fresh air and sweet-smelling bedclothes are worth much more to them than pies; and if you can keep them well they will be hungry enough to "eat anything." But "there are times"—of course, there are—and you can't take all the night clothes of a large family out of doors every day, but if you begin doing it once or twice a week you'll find it possible to do it oftener; and the children love to carry pillows back into the house—if you don't ask them to! More than this, when you keep a simpler furnished bedroom in what is the most healthful

fashion you will find it rarely needs a house-cleaning, and really saves in the year's work.

Insist on the children's changing their underclothes at night. Little children in cold weather need as much warm clothing when asleep as when moving about, but it should be loose and comfortable, and not that worn through the day, which is moist and more likely to give them colds than a window opened at the top. Less bedding and warm night clothes will make them sleep more quietly than with heavy bed clothes. "One-third of our lives is spent in bed," one-half of a child's ought to be, so you cannot be too careful of the bedrooms. They need much reform in the average farmhouse.

QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER VII

1. Is the floor of hard wood or painted?
2. Are the rugs movable or tacked down?
3. Have the windows only such curtains as can be washed?
4. Are mattresses substituted for feather beds?
5. Are mattresses and pillows aired daily, often turned and dusted, occasionally cleaned carefully, and frequently exposed in the open air on a sunny day for several hours?
6. Are the bed coverings washable?
7. Are they, and the night clothes, aired every morning?
8. Are soiled clothes removed at once from the bedrooms?
9. Are the clothes worn through the day aired at night?
10. Can one window, at least, open from the top?

CHAPTER VIII

HALLS, STAIRWAYS, AND BATHROOM

A FARMHOUSE has little need of a formal entrance hall. A vestibule for protection against the cold in winter, with provision for hats and wraps, an umbrella holder, and a seat (a low locker in which to keep overshoes), is all that is needed. Big halls with staircases are hard to heat; the warm air rushes up or the colder air from above will settle, so that the doors are usually kept closed in cold weather. A cold, shut-up hall upsets the ventilating plans for the whole house, and makes a cold, cheerless place. Keep the hall doors open to insure a circulation of fresh air throughout the house. At all events, open the outside door for a while every morning to change the air entirely. If the hall is much used as an entrance the outdoors dirt should be removed every day, for it is the dust from the street that brings in many disease germs near a town. A little used hall, however, should be provided with an outside vestibule and kept open. If it is impossible to heat it, then the stairs may be shut off with a door (either at the top or at the bottom). The uncomfortable halls may always be made into useful space with a little ingenuity and change of partition walls, either taken into the adjoining room or the space behind the stairs used for another purpose.

By putting a partition across the foot of the stairway and a window under the back a most convenient bathroom may be made. Somehow the farmhouse must make possible a comfortable bathroom.

Cleanliness is of more importance than variety in food, and personal cleanliness means more than cleanliness in clothing. Hearty old men may tell you that they have drunk the water from an unsafe well "for forty years"; a well man may prove to you that he "would get his death of cold" if he bathed every day; healthy families may live in houses that are not ventilated; but the younger men and women, the children growing up now, have to pay for the neglect or the ignorance of their elders. Weak lungs, weak hearts, weak backs, colorless faces, and many an inherited disease are the punishments that are "visited upon the heads of the children"; and in order to make our children strong and well we must teach them the laws of health and right living. Bad teeth, weak digestion, sluggish circulation of the blood, stooping shoulders, lack of vitality, and many other weaknesses noticeable in the rising generation can be avoided by clean living and simple, wholesome food. Both these are within the mother's control. Next to pure air and wholesome food a child needs instruction in personal cleanliness. Not only to wash his hands before touching food, to wash his sticky hands rather than wipe them on his clothes, to clean his finger nails properly—in short, to keep his body *clean*—he must be taught to bathe regularly, and it must be made easy for him to do so. "Cleanliness is next

to godliness," and why? When a man or a child is tired out, nervous, or irritable a good bath will give energy and a different turn to the thoughts. A man will have more self-respect when he has bathed; the child is happier and better tempered.

Sensible rules for bathing have not yet been made for the farmer's family. Each family must make its own. The college professor or energetic business man from the city will find great benefit in a cold morning bath, but not the farmer. His bath had better be warm and at night.¹ Then the dirt and fatigue of the day are removed, and give him the best chance for a restful sleep. His morning chores give him outdoor air, exercise quite sufficient for his circulation, and appetite for breakfast. Some children will sleep better for a warm bath at night; but whenever it comes teach them to bathe daily. It is hard for the person of middle age to acquire such a habit, but a child trained to it will not change as he grows up. A prominent physician, in a recent magazine article, says the reason for daily bathing is "not for the body, but for the soul"; and also, that "people who are down with the blues have often got over them by taking the right kind of baths." A good thing for farm women to note.

A reasonable bathing room, then, should be found in every farmhouse¹—"reasonable," not an extravagant bathroom with plumbing, unless you have water and fuel for its maintenance, but at least a room

¹The Farmstead, pp. 208-211, 213-217. The Country Home, pp. 67-68.

that can be easily aired, cleaned, and warmed, in which there is a bathtub and wash basin, connected by pipes and traps with the tile drain. In many farmhouses there is a small room leading from the kitchen, used as a bedroom, which might easily be made into a bathroom and dressing room. It isn't necessary to have running water at first. The fetching of warm water is not what keeps children and others from bathing. It is the standing in a cold room to bathe, and the carrying away the water afterward. If there is provision for waste water and for warming the room, the running water can come after the whole family deems it necessary. Without any plumbing at all the bathtub may be emptied into a low hopper leading to a tile drain. A wooden cover and a rug on it will keep out the cold. A fair-sized tin bathtub can be had in the East for fifteen dollars; a stationary enameled iron one, "good enough for anybody," for about thirty dollars. The portable English tub—the "hat" tub—can be bought for five dollars.

For summer bathing a "splash room" in the shed is a good solution of this problem. A little room, four feet square or thereabouts, with the floor inclined to let water run into a tile drain, and a tank overhead with a "shower," gives great comfort for very little expense.

A corner of a large room used for other purposes may be shut off with a wooden screen to make a bathroom. Simply a bathtub with its drain, and a small stove for warmth and for heating water, is better than none. Many ways and contrivances are possible,

if one only wants the bathroom enough to plan for it. Where a complete installation of good fittings by a responsible plumber is possible, it is the best way in the end; but for those who can't afford it, or whose water supply is insufficient, the simple bathtub, set bowl, and hopper in a room near the kitchen stove make a good substitute. Paint the walls, ceiling, and floor of the bathroom, and you will have no trouble in keeping it clean, even if it is general wash room.

Because the farm bathroom should be in use so much of the time, it is better to keep the water-closet in a space by itself. Take special pains to have it "sanitary."¹ Bad plumbing does a house and its inmates more harm than none at all. Choose the fixtures carefully; be sure of the workmanship of the plumber who does the fitting, and keep constant watch of the working parts and the water supply. Unless you have an abundant water supply and a good drainage system, don't have a water-closet in the house. A well-made earth closet painted throughout (underside of seat boards and inside of box), kept clean and fly-tight, may better be under the house roof than cheap plumbing.

QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER VIII

1. Is the hall kept free from street dirt?
2. Is the hall aired daily?
3. Is the hall kept warm and open?
4. Is the stair carpet kept several inches away from the wall and balusters?

¹ The Care of a House, chapter on Plumbing, especially, pp. 115-121. Home Sanitation, pp. 59-61.

5. Has the bathroom an oiled or painted floor, with no other carpet than a small rug, which is often aired outdoors?
6. Is the space about the tub and bowl quite open, using a wall cupboard instead of drawers?
7. In summer does the fly screen cover the whole window, so that the upper sash can be lowered as well as the lower one raised?
8. In cold weather is the bathroom window opened frequently, top and bottom, for a few minutes at a time?
9. If you have no bathroom, do you have a big portable bathtub?
10. Is it arranged so that you can easily empty the water into a safe drain?

CHAPTER IX

GENERAL SCHEME OF LIVING

THERE are still to be found farms of the old-fashioned sort, where the life of the different members of the family is so mingled with that of the farm that a visitor finds strength and peace and comfort such as can be found in no other home. But it is too often otherwise. A large farm means much labor, and the mother must admit into her family circle at least one hired man; then there comes a time when "help in the house" is needed; from there on the farm home loses its significance. It may be that the family can live by themselves and the "hired help" are in another house, or can amuse themselves and eat in another room. Most parents have their hands full caring for their children, and are wise if they plan their farming operations and their general life so that they may keep their homes to themselves. We should try, not to make money, but to get away from the need of it. As this book aims to help those who do all, or nearly all, of their work alone, we have not considered the mixing with "hired help."

The ideal farmhouse means a family working all together to gain a living from the soil, to make a house that is suited to their needs and pleasures, and to live in such fashion as shall make their surroundings seem a part of their life while affording inspiration to the grow-

ing children. Living on a farm does not mean isolation, nowadays ; there are books, magazines, and newspapers, telephones and interested visitors in many a farming community ; but sometimes it seems as if the older conditions brought up sturdier and more independent men and women than are found in some of the more conventional neighborhoods. Each family *ought* to live in the way its members see fit, at peace with their conscience and their pocketbook, not struggling to build a bigger house than the one on the next farm, not trying to dress as well as the people who have the pew in front, not uncomfortable and ashamed because the work is not done up as early as Mrs. So-and-So's who comes to call. It isn't the measure of right living to compare the state of your own windows or curtains, the number of pies you make, the time you start the fire in the morning, the magnificence of the new chamber set, or the time you get your dress changed with anybody else. The questions that ought to concern the farm mother are: Is the house healthfully clean ? Does the family have the right sort of food ? Are the children growing in as healthy a way as they should ? Is the house comfortable and attractive to every one in the family ? Are there things they want done more than the things you are doing ? If so, can't you plan your living and working so as to make more out of your time and strength ? Do the work and live as your people want you to live, not to satisfy any custom or habit that has grown up in other people's lives.

Most farmers' wives have more work than they can do. No one woman can keep every one of the depart-

ments she is responsible for up to her standards. It is the aim of this book to show her what standards are *necessary for health* and how she can accomplish these ends with more reasonable effort than she puts into dragging work. Effort wasted is a loss to your family as well as to yourself. Try to study out an arrangement of your rooms and tools that will enable you to shorten the time of any one "job," like baking or dishwashing. But try, at the same time, to enlarge your outlook a little; do it first by keeping the doors of all your rooms open, so that you can see the whole house as you go about your morning work. One of my greatest comforts is a large window between the kitchen and dining room through which the dishes go; but incidentally it allows me to see, while washing dishes, the dining room, with the flowers on the table and the row of platters on the wall opposite, and the wide doorway into the living room beyond, where the flames of the open fire are giving comfort, too, to the little boys building block houses. The warm colors, the cushions, the sunshine across the floor, the feeling of distance, and *its being mine* are enough to take the mind off the endless task and give fresh incentive to finish quickly and be in there too. Of course the basket of stockings is waiting; but there are also the new magazines we were reading last night, and, while darning, their covers remind me of another world and the thoughts are full of interest.

There is more than good ventilation in having the rooms all open. The children move about more and do not feel "shut in" in the winter, as they would if they had to stay in the kitchen. If there is a pretty

picture, or a nice clock on the mantel, or a new chair you like to look at, you don't want it shut away in the parlor. Have the best things you own where you can see them every day. If there were no pretty things about us, nothing but the *tools* of our life, we should be dulled, stunted in a part of our growth, and the children would miss the training they need in being taught to respect the good things, to touch books only with clean hands, to keep their feet off the cushions and polished chairs.

If the farmer and his boys change from boots to slippers they will enjoy their evenings in the pleasant room much more. If you teach the boys to sit politely, not to lounge or go to sleep in the presence of others, it is good training against the time when they want manners. If you can bring into every day's life such little formalities as are founded on consideration for others, like looking out for each other's light in reading, keeping the feet or the chair rockers out of the way, giving up a comfortable chair to the mother just entering the room, the life together will have much more meaning to your children. Such formalities do good, and the good things in the best room help train the children; but a conventional parlor is only a burden on the housekeeper and an occasional satisfaction when outsiders are present.

Don't buy chairs the children can break; if they are heavy and strong they will be respected even by a small boy wanting a horse. Don't make cushions of stuff that soils too easily, like dainty silk; stout materials in warm colors are more livable for any of us.

The dainty things are only for show-off parlors. Don't fret if the windows do have finger marks on them; better have happy boys than clean windows. Wash off fly specks, because they are dangerous. Don't think that your housekeeping is all awry because the chairs look "ready to ride out" and bits of paper are all over the floor; make the children pick up the scraps and put back the chairs as best they can "to be ready for papa at dinner time," and you'll find that only a few touches of yours will make it look cheerful again. After all, the rooms and the furniture are for your family, not for your pride to show off to a visitor. There is a great difference between keeping a room or a house in apple-pie order and keeping it livable. If you know that the room was "clean last Saturday," that is, really clean, with no dust left in a carpet, but a rug taken outdoors and the bare floor washed, the simple chairs all stripped of their cushions and the frames wiped clean, and so on, you ought to be able to stand the ruction the little folks make and the confusion among the magazines the older ones left. The dirt they brought in is quickly brushed up, and a real cleaning is coming again.

It is a consoling fact that by caring constantly for the trifles that go to make a sanitary house, you "keep things up" in such a way that your pride need never be hurt. What is "good enough" for your folks will surely do for others, and if there is no unsanitary dust around there is little to impress a visitor. The little confusion that comes from daily living is very different from the disorder that collects

in a room seldom cleared out. A room "feels better" all the week through for the airing and cleaning that we insist on.

The most conventional customs cling to the table. Farmers who wouldn't drive a horse too hard expect pie three times a day; women who make their men folk "wear their bedclothes a little longer" dare not offer a dinner without dessert; and the staple dinner of fried meat, potatoes, and pie goes on day after day, when the farmer, his wife, and his children would be better off for a dinner of eggs, potatoes, squash, salad, and a bit of jelly for fruit flavor and sweet. The most healthful food, fortunately for the farmer's wife, is made from materials grown on the farm, and is much easier to prepare than fancy baking. It may take some time to convince the men folk that cleanliness is more important than kinds of food, but it is worth trying. Men are generally much more ready to take useless or fussy furniture from a living room than women, and it is only a matter of months before you, too, will find sanitary housekeeping much pleasanter and easier than the old-fashioned sort.

Better standards of living throughout the house are worth working for. But while working for them we must not forget that *the great beauty out of doors* is, after all, the wellspring of health on the farm. The children who run barefooted, bareheaded, and care free all summer in fields and pastures never suffer from sunstroke, can eat much fruit with safety, and do many things the carefully housed children cannot. And the mother, in order to meet the great

demands on her strength and nerves, must follow the children's example, and gather into herself all the sunshine and healthful repose of the soil that she can. Two hours' work in the vegetable garden or among the flowers or in the hayfield will often make the worries of the house seem very little. Coming in from outdoors, the house will seem restful in spite of work undone, and the mother is likely to say to herself, "I don't believe the men folk know whether I swept that room or not." And the probabilities are they don't. In the summer, when all are out of doors most of the time, the pursuit of dust may well be relaxed. It is in the winter, when all are housed, that the condition of the cellar, the purity of the air, and the dangers in dust force themselves upon our attention.

Eating out of doors has been for me the most restful relaxation. A simple meal served on a rough table under the apple trees delights the children, rests one, and has hearty masculine approval because of the evident relief to me. Even a large family can easily eat out of doors if there is a piazza fairly near the kitchen stove. Some rough seats or old chairs, an old table, a tray or two, a tea cozy, and covered dishes make it practicable to serve hot dinners on the piazza and give every one a new pleasure.

home. Not as mere luxury, but as a real necessity of life, we must have beautiful things about us suggestive of ideals. We need something to serve the purpose of the old-time sampler, something to bring back that former *pride in skill* which has been so nearly lost. A familiarity with samples of textiles, photographs of good interiors, a few well-chosen articles of genuine suggestiveness, without prohibitive expense, will do much toward raising the standard of taste.

Local loan exhibitions serve a double purpose: to educate the people, and to bring out the valuable things stored away in chests and closets, often unappreciated by their owners. Why should the country farmhouse despoil itself of grandfather's clock or grandmother's brocade? What better decorative material will the few dollars the collector pays purchase? Besides, the appropriateness of the old material, to say nothing of the spirit of the old life shut up within its very pores, adds a value to things in their own place. If a town is so new as to have no old things let some one "send back home" or ransack the country about, or even secure photographs of good designs, small samples of good fabrics. Set the young people to studying the qualities which make these articles of value, and spur them on to create new designs appropriate to modern life.

The first and last word on *value* is the time and thought put upon the work.

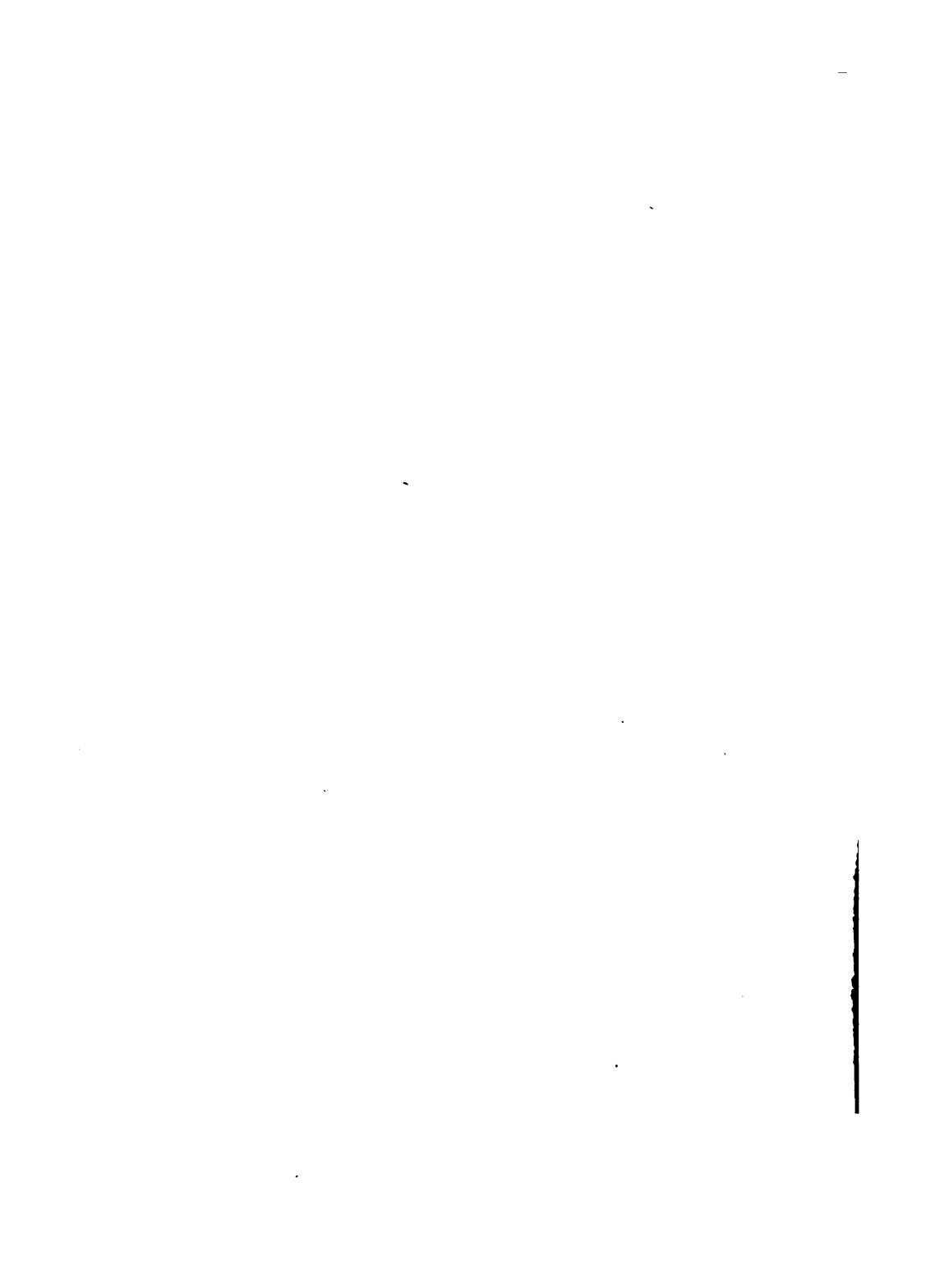
Any rural community could find enough treasures to start its consolidated school museum, and a few dollars a year will secure permanent examples of the more important suggestions.

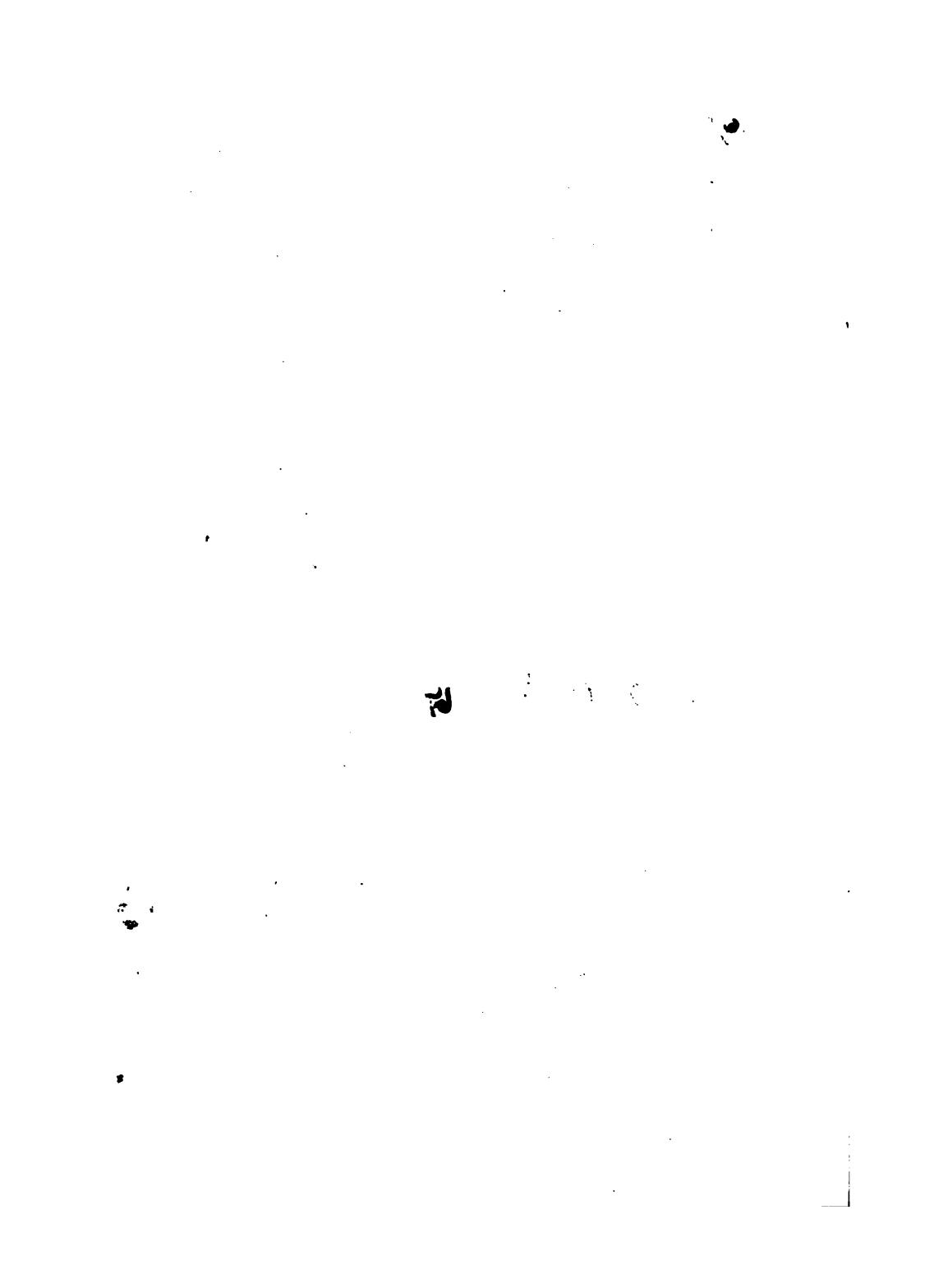
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These endeavors will add interest and unity to the social relations of the community, and give healthful occupation to mind and body without resorting to expensive visits to the neighboring city in quest of amusement which leaves nothing tangible behind.

Let us develop the workshop and the loan museum in the consolidated rural school.







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